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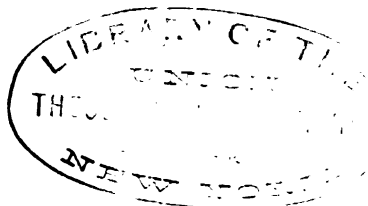
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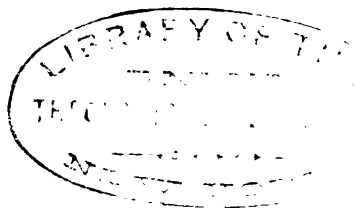


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ANNOTATIONS  
ON  
THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

BY  
F. W. STELLHORN  
*Professor of Theology, Capital University, Columbus, Ohio*



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## PREFACE.

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THE author of this volume of the *Lutheran Commentary* has tried to make his work exactly what the sub-title says, *a plain exposition* of the biblical book entrusted to his treatment. It is meant to be *plain*, intelligible also to laymen with a fair common education; and the hope is cherished that it will be used by many of them when searching the Scriptures. But it is also intended to be an *exposition* in the full meaning of this term. The endeavor has been to bring out as fully as possible in a work of this nature and size the import and meaning of the holy narrative, both as to the train of thought and as to the signification of the individual sentences, phrases, and words. The former object has been sought to be attained by having every section followed by a summary explanation; the latter, by rendering in notes every help that in addition was deemed necessary to give the reader the full sense of the original. Hence literal translations and explanations have been given that sometimes may by a superficial reader be deemed superfluous. On the other hand, nothing has been introduced that does not subserve this purpose of rendering the sense as clear as possible; no learned citations of any nature are given. That faithful use has been made of the helps at the author's command, especially the best commentaries and dictionaries, the intelligent reader will notice without

repeated citations. The hope is indulged that the notes may even be of some use to those that make the original text the basis of their study of the Bible—as every one ought to do who at all can. The space allotted each volume of itself precluded not only lengthy dogmatical disquisitions, but also frequent ethical and practical applications. Only in a few instances that seemed to demand it has a somewhat extended treatment of a topic been permitted to enter. When the full sense of the Word of God is set forth the application will naturally follow with every earnest reader.

Sincere thanks are due, and are hereby expressed, to the author's esteemed colleagues, the Rev. Prof. M. Loy, D. D., and the Rev. Prof. A. Pflueger, A. M., for valuable suggestions.

May the good Lord graciously deign to bless the humble, imperfect work, for the sake of the divine, saving truth that it endeavors to help set forth! This is the heartfelt wish and prayer of

THE AUTHOR.

CAPITAL UNIVERSITY,  
COLUMBUS, OHIO, *May*, 1896.

## INTRODUCTION.

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THE AUTHOR of the Acts of the Apostles, according to the unanimous tradition of the early Church (e. g. the Muratorian Canon, Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen) is *Luke*, the Physician, a friend and companion of Paul (Col. iv. 14; 2. Tim. iv. 11; Philemon 24), the same who wrote the third Gospel. His name, seemingly an abbreviation of Lucanus, and especially the fact that in Col. iv. 10-14 he is mentioned after "those of the circumcision," show him to have been of heathen parentage. Acts xvi. 10 sqq. and xx. 5 sqq. (xxvii. 1 sqq.) we find him the travelling companion of Paul, as modestly indicated by the simple use of the first person plural ("*we*," etc.). He is said to have been a native of Antioch. What he did after the death of Paul, when and where and how he died, is not known with any certainty. According to one tradition he labored in the twofold capacity of a preacher and a physician in Italy, Gaul, Dalmatia, and Macedonia, attained a great age, and suffered martyrdom in Elæa in the Peloponnesus; according to another, Emperor Constantine caused his remains to be brought to Constantinople and to be interred there in the Church of the Apostles.

THE DATE of writing the Acts, which certainly must be later than that of Luke's Gospel (Acts i. 1 sqq.), can-

not be put before the close of the second year of Paul's captivity at Rome (xxviii. 30 sq.); and it would also seem to have been prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, since there are no indications in the book that this important event had already taken place. That the book was known and used as authentic already in the beginning of the second century, certain allusions to its contents in the writings of the Apostolical Fathers, especially Ignatius and Polycarp, show; to which testimony must be added that of the nearly contemporaneous Didache and that of the somewhat later Justin Martyr, not to speak of others. Some suppose that Luke had intended to write a third book (comp. Acts i. 1), describing the last years of the activity of Paul, as also his death, and adding, perhaps, some account of Peter's later labors and those of other apostles; and that, for some cause unknown to us, this intention was not carried out. This would explain the somewhat unexpected, abrupt close of our book; and if the supposition were true, the date of the composition of Acts might reasonably be placed somewhat later than the destruction of Jerusalem (A. D. 70), since that event most naturally would have been mentioned in the third book.

As to the AUTHENTICITY of Acts, we will simply here mention the undeniable fact, proved by most competent authority, that the identity of the vocabulary and style, and in general the mode of narration and description, shows the author of Acts to be the same as the author of the third Gospel; and that the very same identity obtains with regard to those portions of Acts wherein the author speaks of himself in the first person (which portions may have been taken from an original account written by Luke himself and forming one of the documents used by him in writing his canonical works; comp. Luke i. 1 sqq.)

and the other portions, proving the work to be the product of one pen.

THE OBJECT of Luke in writing the Acts, according to i. 1 sqq., was to give, in the first place to his friend Theophilus, *a continuation of his Gospel*; in other words, to show *what the exalted Saviour had done through His Apostles to continue the work that He had begun in His humiliation*; how the Church, founded on Pentecost, developed and spread from the Jews to the Gentiles, from Jerusalem to Rome. Hence, the name of this book, "Acts of the Apostles," in use already at the close of the second century, must be understood as expressing this, and no more; for it was evidently not the intention of Luke to give, in this book, the history of the activity of all the apostles.

DIVISION. I. Introduction (ch. i.). II. The Spreading of the Gospel among the Jews, especially through the instrumentality of Peter: (A.) At Jerusalem (chs. ii.-vii.); (B.) In Palestine in general (chs. viii.-xii.). III. The Spreading of the Gospel among the Gentiles, especially by the instrumentality of Paul: (A.) The Activity of Paul (xiii. 1—xxi. 16); (B.) The Captivity of Paul (xxi. 17—xxviii. 31).





## I.—THE INTRODUCTION.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### (A.) THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

1-11. The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which he was received up, after that he had given commandment through the Holy Ghost unto the apostles whom he had chosen : to whom he also shewed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God : and, being assembled together with them, he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, *said he*, 'ye heard from me : for John indeed baptized with water ; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

They therefore, when they were come together, asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel ? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father has set within his own authority. But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you : and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up ; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they were looking stedfastly into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel ; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven ? this Jesus, which was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven.

The first book written by Luke for his friend Theophilus, the third Gospel, treats of the wonderful deeds and teachings by which Jesus the Christ laid the founda-

tion for the kingdom of God, up to the very day of His ascension (1 sq.). Before Luke now proceeds to narrate in this second book, the Acts, what the exalted Saviour has done through His apostles for the spreading of that kingdom among Jews and Gentiles, he describes more fully what in his Gospel (xxiv. 50 sqq.) he had simply touched upon, the ascension of Christ and the remarkable events connected with it. Having during a period of forty days by repeated appearances proved to His disciples His resurrection and Messiahship, and given them further instruction on the kingdom founded by Him (3), He at last met them again and commanded them to wait at Jerusalem for the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost promised already in the Old Testament, and then also in the New by Christ Himself as well as by John the Baptist (4 sq.). As the disciples knew that this promise was given in connection with the kingdom of the Messiah, they addressed the question to Him whether perhaps He was now about to restore to the Old Testament people of God the glorious kingdom of David and Solomon (6). In His answer He did not deny that at some future time He would establish a kingdom of glory wherein all the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament would be fully realized, though not in the carnal manner and form in which they still, together with the Jews in general, expected it; but He forbade them to be curious about the time, both in general and in particular, since the heavenly Father has determined this in and by His own authority and has not seen fit to reveal it to any one (7). Their work is rather to prepare mankind for that glorious event by spreading the kingdom of grace upon earth, in the power of the Holy Ghost witnessing of Christ and His redemption in all the world, beginning at Jerusalem (8). After these

parting words Christ was lifted up from the earth before the eyes of His disciples, and then taken out of sight by a cloud (9). Whilst they were intently gazing after Him they all at once found two divine messengers by their side (10), who reminded them that not idle longing but inspiring hope for the visible reappearance of their divine Saviour and King ought to fill their hearts (11).

Ver. 1. Luke's mention of his first book, the third Gospel (Luke i. 1-4), leads us to expect him to speak, in contradistinction to this (comp. the Greek particle *men*, pointing to a following *de*: on the one hand—on the other), of a second book and its contents; but instead of doing this after verse 2, he adds first a fuller description of Christ's ascension. **Began.** Laying the foundation of His kingdom. **To do and to teach.** The kingdom of Christ is based first of all upon what He *did*; His *teaching* simply explains His doing. He is not merely a moral or religious teacher whose teachings were independent of His life and deeds.—Ver. 2. **Through the Holy Ghost.** These words, according to their position in the original text, are most naturally connected with **chosen**: being endowed with the Holy Ghost without measure, He had begun His public ministry on earth and also chosen assistants (Matt. iii. 13 sqq.; x. 1 sqq.).—Ver. 3. **Showed himself.** Repeatedly and really (x. 40 sq.; 1 Cor. xv. 5 sqq.). **Many proofs**; e. g. those that Luke himself relates in his Gospel (xxiv. 13 sqq.). **Kingdom of God.** Comp. Matt. iii. 2. The holy Christian Church, militant on earth, triumphant in heaven, is God's kingdom in a special sense.—Ver. 4. **Being assembled together with them.** This is the usual meaning of the Greek word; the other translation, *eating with them*, is given by old versions and Church Fathers and comports better with the form of the Greek word, viz. the participle of the

*present* tense (comp. also x. 41). **Not to depart from Jerusalem.** Not to begin the performance of their duties as described to them by Christ Himself (Matt. xxviii. 19). **Of the Father.** Already in the Old Testament (ii. 16 sqq.). **From me;** e. g. John xiv. 16 sq., 26; xv. 26.—Ver. 5. **John.** Also he prophesied concerning the miraculous outpouring of the Holy Ghost (Luke iii. 16); and what he prophesied is now soon to take place. John's baptism, accompanied and interpreted by his teaching, was a means and a seal of repentance and regeneration (Mark i. 4), pointing to, and preparing for, the Messiah who was about to appear. But John was simply the instrument, and could by his own power do nothing but apply water; to work repentance and regeneration, and to pour out the Holy Ghost and miraculous gifts, was not in his power but in that of the Messiah, whose forerunner and instrument John was (comp. xix. 4 sq.).—Ver. 6. **Lord.** This title given to Christ indicates that He sustains the same relation to us that God does, because He is God in the strict sense of the term (John xx. 28; Matt. xxii. 43 sqq.; Acts. ii. 36; Rom. ix. 5). **Dost thou.** The original expresses doubt. **Israel.** Comp. ii. 22.—Ver. 7. **Times or seasons.** The former word means time in general, the latter "a definitely limited portion of time, with the added notion of suitableness" (GRIMM-THAYER). Comp. Matt. xxiv. 36.—Ver. 8. **Both in Jerusalem and in all Judæa.** There they were to begin, Christ and His Gospel being in the first place intended for the chosen people of God; but they were not to confine their labor to the Jews (xiii. 46; Rom. i. 16).—Ver. 9. **A cloud.** The manifestation of the presence and glory of God (Matt. xvii. 5).—Ver. 10. **White apparel.** A fitting symbol of the heavenly, luminous nature and abode of the angels (Matt. xvii. 2, 5; xxviii. 3; John xx. 12; comp. James i. 17).—

Ver. 11. **Also said.** Not merely standing there. **In like manner as.** Visibly and in the clouds (Matt. xxiv. 30).

### (B.) THE ELECTION OF A TWELFTH APOSTLE.

12-26. Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is nigh unto Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey off. And when they were come in, they went up into the upper chamber, where they were abiding; both Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James *the son of Alphæus*, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas *the son of James*. These all with one accord continued stedfastly in prayer, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

And in these days Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren, and said (and there was a multitude of persons *gathered* together, about a hundred and twenty), Brethren, it was needful that the scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost spake before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered among us, and received his portion in this ministry. (Now this man obtained a field with the reward of his iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it became known to all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch that in their language that field was called Akeldama, that is, The field of blood.) For it is written in the book of Psalms,

Let his habitation be made desolate,  
And let no man dwell therein :

and,

His office let another take.

Of the men therefore which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that he was received up from us, of these must one become a witness with us of his resurrection. And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew of these two the one whom thou hast chosen, to take the place in this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas fell away, that he might go to his own place. And they gave lots for them; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

In accordance with the commandment of Christ (verse 4) and the admonition of the angels the disciples returned to Jerusalem (12), to the place where they were staying,

an upper room in, no doubt, a private house. These were the remaining eleven apostles, together with some women who had been special followers of Christ (Matt. xxvii. 56, 61; Luke viii. 2 sq.), especially His mother, mentioned here the last time in the New Testament, and also His brethren, who seem to have been brought to faith by His resurrection. (Comp. Matt. xii. 46; John vii. 5.) Here they stayed till Pentecost, united in prayer (13 sq.).

During this time they also proceeded, no doubt by the guidance of the Holy Ghost, to fill the vacant place of the twelfth apostle. This was done when the number of believers assembled together was comparatively large, and under the direction of Peter, their natural spokesman and leader (15). In a brief but solemn address he directed the attention of his fellow-disciples to the fact, that one of their own preferred number had acted the traitor to his Master, and had met, as it would seem, on the very piece of ground acquired for the price paid to him for his treachery, a most terrible death, that of a suicide whose body, in consequence of the breaking of the rope, was dashed to pieces, so that this ground was commonly called by a name indicative both of his iniquity and his punishment; and all this in accordance with the predictions of the Old Testament writings, whose threats against the enemies of the Lord were especially fulfilled in the case of the traitor. Hence, his place among the apostles was now vacant and had to be filled by appointing another (16-20). But his successor had to be a man who, like the other apostles, was an eye and ear witness of the whole ministry of Christ on earth, especially of His resurrection as the actual seal that God Himself had set upon Christ's doctrine, life, and atoning death as acceptable to Him (21 sq.). Two were found

among the number of the disciples who fully met these requirements, Joseph, called Barsabbas, or also Justus, and Matthias. These were placed before the assembly as candidates, and Christ was invoked Himself to designate the one most suitable for the position so wantonly deserted by Judas (22-25). And as the fulness of the Holy Ghost had not yet been received, the will of the Lord in this important matter was inquired for in the way of the Old Testament, never afterwards followed in the New Testament, namely, by lot. (Comp. Num. xxvi. 55; Josh. xviii. 10; 1 Sam. x. 20 sq.) Thus Matthias was chosen one of the twelve (26).

Ver. 12. The ascension of Christ took place on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, near Bethany (Luke xxiv. 50). **A sabbath day's journey.** About a mile. The rabbinical rule that on the sabbath a journey or walk was not to be longer was, erroneously, based on Ex. xvi. 29; though some limitation in that respect would seem to be in accordance with the rest enjoined on the sabbath day. Bethany was distant from Jerusalem about two miles (John xi. 18), situated on the eastern slope of the mountain. Bethany, therefore, was further from Jerusalem than Mount Olivet proper; hence there is no discrepancy between our verse and Luke xxiv. 50, the latter passage merely stating the locality more exactly, and the statements of distance given there and John xi. 18 being only approximate ("over against"—"about").—Ver. 13. **Upper chamber.** "In the Greek writers (often in Homer) *the highest part of the house*, the upper rooms or story where the women resided; in biblical Greek (Septuag. for *Aliyah*) *a room in the upper part of a house*, sometimes built upon the flat roof of the house (2 Kings xxiii. 12), whither Orientals were wont to retire, in order to sup, meditate, pray, etc." (GRIMM-



THAYER). In all the lists of the apostles, viz. here, Matt. x. 2 sqq.; Mark iii. 16 sqq.; Luke vi. 13 sqq., the arrangement is three sets of four, of which sets Simon Peter, Philip, and James the son of Alphæus are the respective leaders. The three associated with these three leaders are always the same, though they are not always given in the same order. Peter is always the first, and Judas Iscariot, the traitor, always the last. The first set of four contains the two pairs of brothers, fishermen of Galilee, who had been called together, having formerly been disciples of John (John i. 35-42). Peter is always the first in the list, because he was by his very nature and character a leader, being the first to confess Jesus the Messiah (Matt. xvi. 13-19), and also usually the first to speak and to act (John xiii. 6 sqq.; xviii. 10; xx. 3-8; xxi. 2 sqq.; Acts i. 15 sqq.; ii. 14 sqq.; iii. 1 sqq.; iv. 8 sqq.; v. 1 sqq., 15, 29; x. 1 sqq.). But his primacy, if we would call it so, was that of personal ability and honor, not in any way that of official jurisdiction, as can be conclusively shown from Matt. xviii. 18 compared with xvi. 19, the former passage giving to all the apostles the power and authority that in the latter is given to Peter as the representative and spokesman of all; from the letter of Paul to the Galatians, especially ii. 6-14; as also from the whole history of St. Paul as we find it recorded in the Acts and in his Epistles, he nowhere subordinating himself to Peter (e. g. 1 Cor. i. 12; iii. 4 sqq.).—Ver. 14. **His brethren.** In an ordinary history this expression, occurring several times in the books of the New Testament, would, of course, be understood in the usual sense, namely, that they were sons of Joseph and Mary, or of either and another person. As it is, however, three different views have been held concerning them almost since the beginning of the Christian Church:

I. That they were *sons of Joseph and Mary*: the theory of Tertullian, Helvidius, and perhaps the majority of modern commentators. The *reasons* given for holding this view are: wherever they are mentioned (Matt. xii. 46 sqq.; Mark iii. 31 sqq.; Luke viii. 19 sqq.; Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3; John ii. 12; vii. 3-10; Acts i. 13, 14; 1 Cor. ix. 5; Gal. i. 19), there is not the slightest indication that the word is not to be understood in the usual sense, just as the word "mother of Jesus," together with whom they are almost always mentioned. Moreover, Matt. i. 25 and Luke ii. 7, understood in the primary and usual sense, indicate that after Jesus was born Joseph "knew" Mary and had at least one son by her. The principal *objections* to this view are: Christ, on the cross, commended His mother, not to any one of her sons, which would have been natural if she had any beside Him, but to John (John xix. 26, 27). Again, the names of the brethren of Jesus, as given Matt. xiii. 55 and Mark vi. 3, are at least in part the same as those of the sons of Alphæus who belonged to the number of the apostles. (Comp. Matt. x. 3; Luke vi. 16.) The foremost objection, however, from olden times on is founded on the view that Mary, also after the birth of Jesus, remained a virgin, having no sexual intercourse with Joseph, a theory not supported by any Scripture proof, direct or indirect, but very natural in the times when among orthodox Christians no less than among heretics celibacy was regarded one of the principal virtues, if not the principal one, and not so unnatural in itself when we take into account Joseph's knowledge of the supernatural conception of Mary's first-born son and her exceptional dignity resulting from this.—II. That they were *sons of Joseph by a former marriage*, a view held especially by the ancient Greek Church and also in our times defended by some

theologians. The principal *reasons* advanced in favor of this view are: first, if the four brothers and, at least, two sisters of Jesus mentioned Mark vi. 3 and Matt. xiii. 55 sq. were such in the usual sense of these words, and hence younger than He, we cannot see how Mary could undertake a really unnecessary long journey to Jerusalem, leaving at home a number of small children (Luke ii. 41 sqq.); in the second place, the conduct of, at least in part, so much younger brothers towards the oldest one, always so much respected in oriental countries, as we find it described John vii. 3 sqq., is inexplicable, whilst it, as well as Mary's journey, is entirely intelligible if Jesus' brothers and sisters were older than He, viz. children of His foster-father Joseph by a former wife. This would also be in harmony with the fact that after that journey to Jerusalem Joseph is no more mentioned in the Gospels as living, and with the natural inference drawn from this that he had died before the public ministry of Jesus, and also with the at least not improbable inference that he was considerably older than Mary.— III. That they were *sons of Alphæus and Mary* and, at least in part, identical with two apostles, James, the son of Alphæus, and Judas Lebbæus, or Thaddæus (Matt. x. 3; Mark iii. 18; Luke vi. 16; Acts i. 13). Those that hold this view—the Latin Church since Jerome and the older Protestant theologians especially—assume that Alphæus is only another form for Clopas, and further hold either Mary, his wife, to have been a sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus, or Clopas to have been a brother of Joseph, the guardian of Jesus. Thus the brethren of Jesus would in reality have been His cousins, and instead of, apparently, three Jameses prominent in the New Testament as disciples of Christ we would only have two, the James mentioned Gal. i. 19;

ii. 9-12; Acts xii. 17; xv. 13 sqq., under this supposition, being the same as James, the son of Alphæus, since James, the brother of John, had been put to death by Herod Agrippa I. in the year 44 (Acts xii. 1, 2). The principal *reasons* advanced in support of this theory are: John xix. 25, compared with Matt. xxvii. 56 and Mark xv. 40, seems to show that Mary, the mother of James the Less and Joses, and the sister of Jesus' mother, and Mary, the wife of Clopas, were one and the same person, that is, if we regard the words "Mary the wife of Clopas" as an apposition to the preceding ones "his mother's sister." Furthermore, it is of frequent occurrence that the Hebrew (and Septuagint Greek) equivalent for *brother* (*ach* and *adelphos* respectively) is used in a wider sense, denoting a nephew (Gen. xiii. 8; xiv. 16; xxix. 12, 15), as also members of the same people and tribe (Ex. ii. 11; 2 Sam. xix. 12 sq.). That the brethren of Christ seem to have been apostles, at least partly and especially James, and therefore must be identified with the sons of Alphæus, seems to follow from Gal. i. 18 sq. and 1 Cor. xv. 7, as also from the fact that Luke in the Acts after xii. 2 only mentions one James without distinguishing him from another, which would be expected if there had been another one living yet, as must have been the case, if James, the son of Alphæus, and James, the brother of the Lord, were not the same person. The main *exceptions* taken to this argumentation are the following: It cannot be proved that Alphæus and Clopas are only different forms of the same name and denote the same person; nor that John xix. 25 only three women are mentioned, and not four, as the Greek original permits the one interpretation as well as the other, and according to the parallel passages of Matthew and Mark it is highly probable that with John, who never mentions

his own name nor that of his brother and mother, "his mother's sister" means the same person as with the other apostles "the mother of Zebedee's children" and "Salome," so that Christ and His favorite disciple John were cousins, to whom Christ on the cross would commend His mother rather than to His at that time still unbelieving brethren. Neither do we find a single passage in the Old Testament where *cousins* are actually called brethren; and the New Testament even for nephew uses another expression (Acts xxiii. 16), as also for cousin (Col. iv. 10). Nor can a satisfactory reason be given why the brethren of Jesus should always be found in the company of His mother, if they were not her sons, but those of a relative still living who was also a follower of Jesus. Moreover, the brethren of Christ are always distinguished from His disciples and represented as not believing in Him until after His resurrection (John ii. 12; vii. 3 sqq.; Mark iii. 31-35, comp. vi. 4; Acts i. 14). Finally, Gal. i. 18 sq. and 1 Cor. xv. 7 can be understood without making the brethren of Christ apostles in the strictest sense; whilst the silence of the Acts concerning a second James still living after xii. 2, viz. James, the son of Alphæus, does not prove anything, since most of the apostles are not mentioned in that book as to their activity; and James, the brother of the Lord, by the very fact of being such, after his conversion in consequence of his divine Brother's resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 7), was one of the most prominent men among the Christians in Palestine, and hence simply called James (Acts xii. 17; xv. 13; xxi. 18; comp. Gal. ii. 9, 12). In our opinion the third view has least to commend it, the choice being between the first and second views with an exegetical, if not dogmatical, preponderance in favor of the first as the most natural.

Ver. 15. **Brethren.** Those that by faith in Christ have come into the most intimate union and communion with Him and each other; bound together by the same faith, love, and hope; having the same origin, leading the same life, enjoying the same privileges, contending for the same goal, certain of the same inheritance (Gal. iii. 26; Eph. iv. 4-6). **Persons.** Lit. *names*, a Hebraistic expression. (Comp. Num. iii. 40, 43.) **A hundred and twenty.** Neither the same number, nor the same locality and occasion as that mentioned 1 Cor. xv. 6, which passage no doubt refers to an appearance of Christ in Galilee where many were present that did not return to Jerusalem.—Ver. 16. **Brethren.** Lit. *men, brethren*; more solemn and respectful than the simple, familiar *brethren*. **Needful.** What God has foreseen and foretold cannot but take place, though no man is compelled to do good or evil. God cannot be mistaken in His foreknowledge, and He governs also the wickedness and sin of men to subserve His holy ends. Man's wickedness and sin is his own, God is in no way responsible for it; but the form and the deeds in which man's wickedness manifests itself are dependent also on the time, the locality, and the circumstances of a man's life, and these again are dependent on God's almighty and all-wise government. **The scripture,** etc. Compare besides the passage cited in verse 20 also Psalm xli. 9 and John xiii. 18.—Ver. 17. **For.** The Old Testament prophecy pointed to an apostle and could be fulfilled in such a one only. **Received his portion in this ministry.** Was one of our number, one of the apostles, called to this office by Christ Himself out of mere grace. **Portion.** Lot; not merited.—Ver. 18. Comp. Matt. xxvii. 3 sqq. A rhetorical summary of the account given by Matthew, and at the same time a complement of it.—Ver. 19.

**Akeldama.** Aramaic, *chakal d'ma*. (Comp. Matt. xxvii. 8.)—Ver. 20. Comp. Psalm lxix. 25; cix. 8. David, especially with regard to his sufferings and enemies, his deliverance from them and the punishment of his enemies, was a type, an actual, personal prophecy of Christ, his divine Son and Successor. The second passage explains the first: the office vacated by Judas is to be filled by another. **Office.** Lit. *oversership*. (Comp. xi. 30; 1 Tim. iii. 1.)—Ver. 21. **Companied.** Gone, journeyed, travelled. **Went in and out.** A Hebraism = communed, had constant intercourse. (Comp. 1 Sam. xxix. 6; John x. 9.) **Among us.** Lit. *to us*, to be construed with *went in*, and including a *from us* belonging to *went out*. (Comp. John i. 51.)—Ver. 22. **Beginning . . . John.** Best taken as a sort of parenthesis. **Resurrection.** Comp. Rom. i. 4; 1 Cor. xv. 17 sq.—Ver. 23. **Barsabbas.** *The son of Sabbas, bar*, the Aramaic equivalent of the Hebrew *ben*, meaning *son*. **Justus.** According to the usage of those times he bore a Roman surname. (Comp. xiii. 9.) **Matthias.** Hebrew, *Mattithya, gift of the Lord* = Theodore. Of the history of these two men, both before and after this event, we know nothing definite.—Ver. 24. **Knowest the hearts.** The *external* requisites mentioned ver. 21 sq. were not sufficient.—Ver. 25. **Ministry and apostleship.** The latter expression explains the former, so that *and* is equal to *namely*. **Fell away.** Went away, deserted it. **His own place.** Eternal perdition, the proper punishment for his enormous crime, which he could not but reach by deserting the place and position so graciously assigned him by Christ.—Ver. 26. No doubt, in accordance with the ancient custom, used already at the time of Homer, two tablets, each with the name of one of the two respectively, were put into a vessel, or on the lap of a robe (Prov. xvi. 33); and he whose lot by shaking leaped out first was regarded as the person chosen by the Deity

## II.—THE SPREADING OF THE GOSPEL AMONG THE JEWS, ESPECIALLY THROUGH THE INSTRUMENTALITY OF PETER (Chs. II.—XII.).

(A.) AT JERUSALEM (Chs. II.—VII.).

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### CHAPTER II.

(A.) THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY GHOST (A. D. 31).

1-13. And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speaking in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilæans? And how hear we, every man in our own language, wherein we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judæa and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we do hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God. And they were all amazed, and were perplexed, saying one to another, What meaneth this? But others mocking said, They are filled with new wine.

In obedience to the words of their parting Master (i. 4)



the disciples remained together at Jerusalem until the time had come when the Holy Ghost was to be poured out upon them in an extraordinary manner. The divinely appointed day for this proved to be that of *Pentecost*, that is, the *fiftieth* day after the second day of Easter. On this latter day the grain harvest was solemnly ushered in by offering the first sheaf, and on Pentecost it was as solemnly ended by offering the first two loaves of bread made of the new grain (Lev. xxiii. 4 sqq.). The first high festival of the Old Testament, Passover or Easter, was transformed into a New Testament festival by the sufferings and resurrection of Christ; and the second, Pentecost, was changed in the same way by the pouring-out of the Holy Ghost. Evidently the Lamb of God could not have suffered, died, and arisen at a more suitable time than when His Old Testament type, the Paschal Lamb, was eaten; and in a similar way the pouring-out of the Holy Ghost and the reception of the first-fruits of apostolic preaching into the Christian Church could not have taken place at a more proper time than when the firstlings of the grain harvest were offered to God (1). The heavenly wonder that was to be wrought on this day was announced by a sudden supernatural *sound* that was *heard* throughout the building where the disciples were assembled (2). Then they *saw* an *appearance* in the form of tongues as of fire that were distributed among those present, each one having one of them settled on his head (3). The heavenly sound and the fiery tongues, however, were only the external symbols and pledges of the divine operation purifying and enlightening the hearts of the disciples and enabling them to speak the saving revelation of God in all purity. The Holy Ghost was poured out upon them in an extraordinary mode and measure; and this became manifest by their speaking in

languages that they had never had an opportunity of learning, each one in that which the Holy Ghost enabled him to use as a means of inspired speech (4). This was to prove that the glorious deeds of God of which they spoke were done for all men and were to be preached to all, whatever their nation and language might be; and it also showed that the saving grace of God in Christ can and, where the operation of the Holy Ghost is not obstinately resisted, will overcome and remove the divisions and barriers caused by sin. (Comp. Gen. xi. 1-9.) There were now a number of Jews, born and educated in every conceivable country of the earth, who, prompted by piety, had taken their abode at Jerusalem, the centre of the Old Testament worship (5). The extraordinary sound, first filling the house, but then also penetrating the other parts of the city, caused them together with others to repair to the scene; and to their bewilderment they heard every one his own dialect spoken by one or the other of the disciples, men that had all been brought up in Galilee, the northernmost division of Western Palestine (6-11). But, greatly astonished as they were, they could not find an explanation of the signification of these extraordinary occurrences. Others, however, probably adherents of the leaders of the people and hence hostile to Christ, looking merely at the uncommon form of speech, in low mockery attributed the conduct of the disciples to sweet wine (12 sq.).

Ver. 1. **Pentecost.** Means, *fiftieth*, viz. day after Easter. The word, however, is already in the apocryphal writings of the Old Testament (Tob. ii. 1; 2 Macc. xii. 32) used as a proper noun designating the second of the three great festivals of the Israelites, namely, the feast of grain-harvest (Ex. xxiii. 14 sqq.). Later on, though we do not yet find indications of this in Philo

and Josephus, Pentecost was regarded by the Jews as being a festival in commemoration also of the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai (Ex. xix. 1 sqq.). **All.** Not simply the apostles, but all the believers in Christ that were at Jerusalem.—Ver. 2. **House.** Not certain whether a private house (comp. i. 13, 15) or one of the thirty halls that, according to Josephus, surrounded the temple proper. As the latter were called “houses,” and the day was that of a great festival, and the hour that of morning sacrifice and prayer (ver. 15; comp. iii. 1; Ex. xxix. 38 sqq.; Luke i. 10), it is at least probable that one of those halls was the place meant, although the simple expression *house* would seem to point to a private dwelling.—Ver. 3. **It sat.** Viz. such a fiery tongue, in consequence of the **parting asunder** or being distributed among the individual disciples.—Ver. 4. **Other tongues,** according to vers. 8 and 11 (comp. Mark xvi. 17), must mean foreign languages. **Gave them utterance.** Lit. *gave*, enabled, *them to utter*, speak out, pronounce, speak.—Ver. 6. **This sound.** The same as that mentioned in ver. 2, though the word in the original is different. **Was heard.** Lit. *had taken place*; hence **sound** cannot here mean *rumor, tidings*, and the like. Vers. 8-11. These verses evidently form one period, **Parthians—Arabians** being an apposition to **we**, which subject is, after that long apposition, taken up again in ver. 11, together with the predicate and the emphatic adverbial phrase: **We do hear them speaking in our tongues.** In ver. 8 **We** is emphatic, in contrast with those **Galileans**. **Parthians and Medes and Elamites:** nations belonging to the former Persian kingdom, *east* of Palestine; **Mesopotamia:** *north*; **Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia:** countries of Asia Minor, *northwest*, Asia denoting here, as with Pliny, only the

west coast provinces of Asia Minor (Caria, Lydia, and Mysia). **Judæa** is also mentioned, in the first place, because it was the terminal point of the converging lines of the northeastern and northwestern dispersion; in the second place, because the Aramaic language spoken there, as in the whole of Palestine at that time, differed somewhat from that spoken in Galilee (the word for **language** in ver. 8 is *dialectos* and, of course, includes what we now call *dialect*). **Egypt and the parts of Lybia about Cyrene.** *South and southwest* of Palestine, in Northern Africa. **Sojourners from Rome.** Jews whose home was at Rome and in the countries near this city, who had come to Jerusalem to *sojourn* or stay there for some time, for religious or other purposes. **Both Jews and proselytes.** Refers to all the before-mentioned nations, some of the members present being Jews by birth, some converts from heathenism. (Comp. Matt. xxiii. 15; Acts viii. 27.) There are exegetes, however, who refer those words, lit. *not only Jews but also proselytes*, only to the preceding clause, *sojourners from Rome.* **Cretans and Arabians.** *Northwest and southeast* of Palestine; they are placed at the end of the list, perhaps, on account of their small number. **The mighty works of God.** Those connected with Christ and man's salvation, including, of course, Christ's resurrection as, in a manner, the climax (Rom. i. 4).—Ver. 13. **New wine.** Better, *sweet wine*. It could not be *new* in the proper sense of the term, Pentecost being separated from the vintage by about eight months. Some suppose it to have been wine produced from the very purest juice of the grape; others, wine made from dried grapes soaked in old wine or water. It must have been either very delicious, or very intoxicating, or both.

## (B.) ST. PETER'S PENTECOST SERMON.

14-36. But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spake forth unto them, *saying*, Ye men of Judæa, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and give ear unto my words. For these are not drunken, as ye suppose; seeing it is *but* the third hour of the day; but this is that which hath been spoken by the prophet Joel;

And it shall be in the last days, saith God,  
I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh:  
And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
And your young men shall see visions,  
And your old men shall dream dreams:

1 Yea and on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days  
Will I pour forth of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.  
And I will shew wonders in the heaven above,  
And signs on the earth beneath;  
Blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:  
The sun shall be turned into darkness,  
And the moon into blood,  
Before the day of the Lord come,  
That great and notable *day*:  
And it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David saith concerning him.

I beheld the Lord always before my face;  
For he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:  
Therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;  
Moreover my flesh also shall dwell in hope:  
Because thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades,  
Neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption.  
Thou madest known unto me the ways of life;  
Thou shalt make me full of gladness with thy countenance.

Brethren, I may say unto you freely of the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us unto this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set *one* upon his throne; he foreseeing

*this* spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left in Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear. For David ascended not into the heavens : but he saith himself,

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.

Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified.

Peter, usually the leader and speaker of the apostles (comp. i. 13), acting here at the same time as their attorney over against unfounded charges, solemnly addresses all those that were present, whether native Jews or only inhabitants of Jerusalem. (Comp. 5.) In the enlightenment and courage bestowed by the Holy Ghost just now poured out upon him and his fellow-believers, he in the first place gives an open and frank explanation of what had occurred (14). The uncharitable assumption of those that had ascribed the conduct of the disciples to excessive use of intoxicants he briefly refutes as most improbable, it being only the third hour of the day, nine o'clock in the morning, a time when no Jew of any decency could be expected to be in a state of drunkenness, especially since this was the time for the morning sacrifice and prayer (15 ; comp. verse 2). No, the only correct explanation of that wondrous event is that the prophecy of old (Joel ii. 28-32) is now being fulfilled (16), viz. that after the appearance of Christ extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit would be granted in abundance to all classes of men, among the Jews, the Old Testament people of God, in the first place, but then also among all those that in truth are servants of the Lord (17 sq.). Those times will also witness the preparation for the final, universal, and manifest judgment, and will announce the

coming of it by various terrible signs, e. g. by bloody wars and destructive conflagrations on earth and extraordinary occurrences in the starry heavens; and at this judgment those only, but also all those, will be saved from eternal destruction who by faith have taken refuge in Jesus Christ as the divinely-appointed and revealed Redeemer of mankind (19-21). For Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah. This the members of the Old Testament people of God should be the first to recognize; for they were the very people to whom God had accredited Him as the Messiah by undeniable miraculous deeds of every description which He performed in their midst by divine power (22). They, indeed, instead of receiving Him as their Messiah and Saviour, had put Him to death on the cross, aided by the traitor Judas and the unjust and cruel heathens, Pilate and his soldiers; but this had been done only in accordance with the unalterable decree of God determining that Christ was to suffer and die for the redemption of the human race, and the divine foreknowledge seeing from all eternity how Christ would be received and treated by men (23). And God had not only foreordained His sufferings and foreknown the mode and instrumentality of them; but He also raised Him, delivering Him from death and all its consequences, and thus proved Him to be the Conqueror of death promised already in the Old Testament (24). For David, both his ancestor and type, had prophesied concerning Him (Ps. xvi. 8-11) that, by virtue of His continual and most intimate communion with God, His omnipotent Helper, He would not only in general be replete with divine joy, notwithstanding all His enemies, but also rejoice in the sure hope that He would not, as to His body, become a prey of corruption and decay, but, on the contrary, would triumph over death and the grave,

and thus enter into His glory and joy (Matt. xxv. 21) in never-ending communion with God (25-28). For of David, that justly celebrated ancestor and founder of the royal house of Judah, it can and must be frankly said that this passage of Holy Writ, though in the first place it refers to him, yet goes entirely beyond him and his experiences, and, hence, cannot be said to have its final and complete fulfilment in him; for at last he also had to succumb to death and decay and still is in this condition common to fallen men (29). Nor did he expect anything else; therefore, being inspired and firmly believing in the solemn promise given him by God that his seed was to have an everlasting throne and kingdom (2 Sam. vii. 12 sq.; Ps. lxxxix. 4 sq.; cxxxii. 11 sq.), he looked into the future and prophesied concerning His Son Christ; for of Him can and must be predicated to the fullest extent what is true of David and Solomon, his immediate son and successor, in an imperfect and typical manner only (30 sq.). Jesus, the true Christ, has escaped death and corruption by His glorious resurrection, as those that were in a position to know Him best can and do testify (32). And now, being by the omnipotence of God exalted to the throne of glory, He has also received the power to give to His disciples in the fullest measure the Holy Spirit whom He had so often promised to them; and He has done this on this first Christian Pentecost festival, and thus the wonderful occurrences on that day are to be explained as the effects of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost (33). For in Christ, and not in David, that too has been fulfilled which the latter prophesied (Ps. cx. 1) of Him who, as his Son and Lord, was to partake of divine majesty and power and finally to subdue completely all his enemies (34 sq.). Thus, then, it is an immovable truth, which first of all should be recognized by



the Old Testament people of God, that that very Jesus of Nazareth, whom they, instead of joyfully welcoming, so ignominiously put to death, by God has been made and declared Lord of all (x. 36) and the promised Redeemer of mankind (36).

Ver. 14. **Standing up . . . lifted up his voice and spake forth unto them.** His gestures and voice indicated the solemn and important character of what He was about to say. (Comp. v. 20; ii. 14.) **Be this known unto you,** etc., expresses the same idea in words.—Ver. 15. **These.** The apostles and the other disciples who had spoken with other tongues. Peter speaks of them as their attorney, in the third person, not excluding himself, but pointing to them. **Ye.** Emphatic, *their* judgment being contrary to truth.—Ver. 17. **In the last days.** The last times of this world, ushered in by the first appearance of Christ, the New Testament dispensation, ending with the second appearance of Christ and the final judgment. This is a free rendering of the Hebrew original which simply means *afterward*, and at the same time is an inspired explanation. **Flesh.** Men, as distinguished from all other rational beings, God and angels, by having flesh, or a body (Rom. i. 3; John i. 14); connoting, however, as a rule sinfulness and frailty, as the general condition of man after the fall (Matt. xxiv. 22; Luke iii. 6; John iii. 5 sq.; Rom. iii. 20; vii. 14, 18; 1 Cor. i. 29; Gal. ii. 16). **Visions,** whilst awake, more natural to lively **young men**; **dreams,** in sleep, more to less excitable **old men**; though, in accordance with the Hebrew parallelism, both predicates are applicable to both subjects. (Comp. Rom. x. 10.)—Ver. 18. Evidently an emphatic repetition of the main contents of the preceding verses, extending at the same time the promised blessing to *all* the **servants** of the Lord of either sex, who acknowledge Him as their

Sovereign Redeemer. **Prophecy.** Announce the will of God by inspiration, whether pertaining to the past, present, or future. (Comp. xi. 27.)—Ver. 19. **Wonders.** Unexpected, inexplicable, wonderful occurrences, at which men are amazed. **Signs.** The same occurrences in so far as they are intended to direct the attention of men to something higher, to signify, symbolize, or prove something spiritual. Here again we have that parallelism mentioned above (17). (Comp. Matt. xxiv. 6 sq., 29.) Ver. 20. **Notable.** Manifest, known to all as such, viz. as the day of Christ's final appearance for judgment. The apostle here follows the Septuagint translation, instead of the Hebrew original which is equivalent to "*terrible*," since also the former, which at that time was in general use, contains divine truth, being in accordance with the analogy of faith. Thus we find it to be the case often in citations from the Old Testament.—Ver. 21. **Name:** 38.—Ver. 22. **Ye men of Israel.** An honorary appellation, intended to render them conscious of their position and consequent duty. **Israelite** denotes a member of the *people of God*, in contradistinction to a Gentile, Israel being the honorary name of the ancestor (Gen. xxxii. 28). **Mighty works.** Simply another name for **wonders** and **signs** (19), denoting their essence and source, being deeds performed by divine power; all three expressions combined are an exhaustive expression of the idea, denoting the *nature*, the *external appearance*, and the *intention* of the occurrence or deed.—Ver. 23. **Delivered up.** By Judas. **Lawless men.** Men without the law, heathen; the expression may, however, also here connote special wickedness. (Comp. 1 Cor. ix. 21; Rom. ii. 12;—Luke xxii. 37; 1 Tim. i. 9; 2 Thess. ii. 8; 2 Pet. ii. 8.) **By the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.** Without these it would not have taken place; the fore-

knowledge enabled God to foreordain, fix definitely, also the *mode* of Christ's sufferings and death without compelling either the Jews or the Gentiles to act as they did. **Ye did crucify.** Comp. v. 30.—Ver. 24. **The pangs of death.** The resurrection is regarded as a *birth* to new life, death, so to say, *travailing* as long as it holds the dead. Here again the Septuagint is followed, instead of the Hebrew original which means *cords* or *bands*, death being regarded as a hostile hunter taking man prisoner. **Loosed.** Here, in connection with *pangs*, equivalent to *ended*, taken away. **It was not possible.** He being the **Holy One**, described in the following verses.—Ver. 25. **I beheld**, etc., was in constant, intimate communion with the Lord, trustingsolely in Him. **On my right hand.** As counsellor and defender (Ps. cix. 31). **Moved.** Overthrown, overcome, vanquished, by enemies and adversity. Ver. 26. **Was glad**, etc. The preterite here, as in the preceding verse, does not exclude the present. **In hope.** Of not being left in the grave. **Dwell.** In the grave.—Ver. 27. **Hades.** Originally in Greek writers the name of the supposed ruler of the realm of the dead, then, like the Hebrew *sheol*, designating this realm itself, the common receptacle of all the dead, though later, as also in the New Testament, with two divisions, one for the good, the other for the bad. (Comp. Matt. xi. 23; xvi. 18; Luke xvi. 22 sqq.)—Ver. 28. The first clause refers to the resurrection, the second to the exaltation in heaven. **With thy countenance.** Before thee, in thy presence.—Ver. 29. **Brethren.** Lit. *men*, *brethren*, the former expressing honor, the latter love. **His tomb.** (Comp. Nehem. iii. 16.) Jerome states that in his days (D. A. D. 420) the tomb was still visited.—Ver. 30. **He would set.** Better, because more natural in the original than the marginal rendering, *one should sit*.—Ver. 33. **The**

**promise of the Holy Ghost.** The realization of this promise—the promised Holy Ghost. **This.** What is the invisible cause of these visible and audible effects, viz. the Holy Ghost.—Ver. 34 sq. (Comp. Matt. xxii. 44.) **Till.** Even during that time; much more afterwards, when completely victor.—Ver. 36. **All the.** Better than *every*: **house of Israel** is treated as a proper noun, having no definite article. **Lord.** In general, over all. **Christ.** Messiah, Redeemer. **Ye.** Emphatic, in contrast with God.

### (C.) THE EFFECT OF PETER'S SERMON.

37-47. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter *said* unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him. And with many other words he testified, and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation. They then that received his words were baptized: and there were added *unto them* in that day about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers.

And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need. And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they did take their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved.

The powerful, inspired sermon of Peter pierced the hearts and consciences of at least a great part of his hearers. (comp. 41), filled them with anguish and contrition on account of their treatment of the Messiah promised and sent first to them, and impelled them to ask the apostles, who now stood before them in an en-

tirely different light from what had been the case formerly, how they could be delivered from their ungodly and unhappy condition (37). The answer given them by Peter, the spokesman of the apostles (i. 13), only more fully set forth what John the Baptist had already preached as the sole way of salvation (Mark i. 4), namely, a change of heart in general, but especially with respect to Christ and His Gospel, and baptism accompanied by true faith in what Christ according to His Gospel intends to be and to do for us. This would bring them forgiveness of all their grievous, heart-oppressing sins in the first place, and then also the gift of all gifts, the Holy Spirit, whose wonderful operations and gifts they had just now been admiring in the apostles (38). For they and their children, as members of the people of the covenant, were the very men to whom the promises of the Messiah and all His blessings and gifts were given, and for whom they were intended in the first place, though they were also meant for the Gentiles, distant and foreign as they were both in body and in spirit (Eph. ii. 13, 17), since they also were to be called by the preaching of the Gospel to become fellow-heirs with the Old Testament people of God (39). This, however, is only a brief summary and sample of all the solemn and repeated exhortations that Peter addressed to his hearers, to move them to break off, by repentance and baptism, their present spiritual fellowship with their countrymen that persevered in their perverse rejection of Christ, and thus to escape the impending judgment (40). Those now that in repentance and faith received this exhortation, permitted themselves by baptism to be added to the number of Christians, about three thousand in all (41). And they were constant in listening to the further instructions of the apostles; in cultivating brotherly communion, of course also with

regard to mutual assistance and support (Rom. xv. 26; 2 Cor. viii. 4; Heb. xiii. 16); in having common meals and in connection therewith celebrating the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. x. 16; xi. 17 sqq.); and in "all prayer and supplication, praying at all seasons" (42; comp. Eph. vi. 18).

And even those that did not become believers in Jesus the Christ could not help having a feeling of awe in view of the wondrous occurrences which they had either witnessed or heard about, which awe prevented them from disturbing the new-born Christian Church. And this feeling was kept alive and increased by the many miraculous deeds performed by the apostles in Jerusalem (43). But those who had become believers were together as much as possible and even had their goods in common (44), disposing of whatever they possessed and dividing the proceeds according to the wants of each (45). And not only with one another did they hold constant communion, but also with God, unanimously continuing their attendance at the Old Testament sanctuary and besides assembling in private houses, especially for the purpose of celebrating the Lord's Supper, and in connection therewith partaking of their food in a manner befitting the followers of Christ (46), giving praise to God for all His mercy and grace, and being regarded with favor by the people in general. And Christ Himself took care of the increase of His church, adding daily all those that permitted themselves to be saved by Him from eternal destruction (47).

Ver. 37. **And said.** As a natural result. **Brethren.** Comp. verse 29.—Ver. 38. **In the name,** etc. Not meaning the formula of baptism, but the sphere, foundation, and ground of baptism, faith, and confession. The *name* of Christ is His revelation as the Messiah and Saviour of

mankind, contained in the Gospel; and faith in this Gospel, in Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Messiah, is to be their motive for being baptized, since otherwise baptism, though valid and a means of grace in itself, could not benefit and save them. **The gift of the Holy Ghost.** This is always the consequence of baptism and faith; here, in the beginning of the church, it included miraculous gifts as an incontrovertible proof of the divine character of Christianity, which gifts now, after the church has existed for many centuries and in many ways manifested its divine origin, are no more needed as such a proof.—Ver. 39. **As many as.** This need not mean that God intends to call and save only some; it rather means that without the call to faith and salvation on the part of God and the acceptance of this call on the part of man, no one can be saved. Compare on this use of “as many as,” meaning *all*, iii. 24.—Ver. 40. **Testified.** Charged earnestly, admonished solemnly. **Crooked.** On a crooked, wrong way, perverse, wicked.—Ver. 41. **Were baptized.** Not necessarily on the same day, nor by the apostles only, nor by immersion; though it would seem most natural that they were all baptized on that very day, and not by immersion.—Ver. 43. **Wonders and signs.** Comp. verse 22.—Ver. 44. **Had all things common.** In imitation, perhaps, of Christ and His disciples (John xii. 6; xiii. 29). This was a spontaneous manifestation and proof of first and fervent love, existing, however, only in the church at Jerusalem, and there simply for a short time, since its continuation became impracticable when Christianity spread over the whole of Palestine and the surrounding countries; and also before it had not been without its attending temptations and dangers, as we see from the case of Ananias and Sapphira (v. 1 sqq.).—Ver. 45. **Possessions and goods.** The former denotes

lands, real estate, and the like; the latter, all other kinds of property.—Ver. 46. **In the temple.** The first Christians attended, as formerly, worship in the Old Testament sanctuary, as long as God did not by word or deed direct them otherwise, that is, up to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple; though, of course, with a far different spirit and understanding from the great mass of their countrymen, since they knew that all the temple and its worship pointed to and prophesied was fulfilled by Jesus the Christ, so that those types were really no more necessary. This is a proof that the spirit of Christianity is conservative, not radical, doing away with old usages and forms that are not sinful in themselves gradually and only in so far as the Gospel demands it. The *temple*, of course, is taken in the wider sense, including the different courts. **With gladness.** In holy, spiritual joy at the benefits conferred by God for the sake of Christ. **Singleness of heart.** Simplicity, without any spiritual pride or arrogance.—Ver. 47. **Having favor with all the people.** No doubt, in consequence of their conduct, and only so long as the people were not incited against them by their leaders. **To them.** Lit. *together*. In the latter signification some make this expression begin the next chapter, against the testimony of the best copies.



## CHAPTER III.

### (A.) HEALING OF A LAME MAN BY PETER AND JOHN.

1-10. Now Peter and John were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer, *being* the ninth *hour*. And a certain man that was lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the door of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked to receive an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk. And he took him by the right hand, and raised him up: and immediately his feet and his ankle-bones received strength. And leaping up, he stood, and began to walk; and he entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God: and they took knowledge of him, that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

Among the many marvellous deeds performed by the apostles for the sake of proving the divine character of their preaching (ii. 43) was also the healing of a lame man by Peter and John. These two apostles, according to the custom of the first Christians (ii. 46), were on their way to the temple place, there to observe the third and last regular hour of prayer (1). Just then a poor lame man, lame since his birth, was being carried to his daily station at one of the temple gates, where he made his living by begging (2). The two apostles were also asked for an alms (3). But Peter, together with his companion, looked sharply into his face to see whether he would be a

proper recipient of the gift that he meant to bestow upon him (4); for the apostles, like their divine Master, were not physicians by profession, and therefore did not indiscriminately heal all sick persons with whom they came in contact, but only those of whom they knew by divine enlightenment that their healing would be of real, spiritual and eternal use and benefit to them or others. The lame man now watching them with eager desire (5), Peter tells him that, indeed, he cannot give him, what perhaps might be expected, a considerable sum of money; but that he can and will give him what is far better: complete health through Jesus the Christ (6). And being raised up by the hand of Peter, the lame man was healed at once (7), so that he sprang to his feet and stood there, then walked about, and first of all went with the apostles to the temple place, manifesting his joy at the health he had gained so unexpectedly, and praising God therefor (8). Thus he proved that the apostles had not been deceived in him. When, however, the people that frequented the place saw the formerly so pitiable man in his present happy condition (9), they were filled with the greatest amazement (10).

**Ver. 1. Peter and John.** These two apostles, belonging to the four first called by Christ (John i. 40 sq.), we as a rule find together, at least during the last days of Christ's life on earth and the first time after His resurrection and ascension (Luke xxii. 8; John xviii. 15 sq.; xxi. 2, 7, 20 sqq.; Acts viii. 14 sq.). Compare i. 13; ii. 14.

**Hour of prayer.** The Jews had, in accordance with the three main divisions of day-time (Ps. lv. 17), three regular hours of prayer (Dan. vi. 10): the third hour of the day, 9 o'clock in the forenoon, for the morning prayer, in connection with the morning sacrifice (comp. ii. 15); the sixth hour, about noon (comp. x. 9); the ninth

hour, 3 o'clock in the afternoon, for the evening prayer, in connection with the evening sacrifice (iii. 1; x. 3). The ancient church adopted those hours when it fixed the regular daily times for prayer.—Ver. 2. **Door of the temple which is called Beautiful.** Probably the one opening from the Court of the Gentiles eastward into the valley of Jehoshaphat, near the porch of Solomon (ver. 11) called Shushan after the Persian capital Susa (the "City of Lilies"), where the market for doves and other sacrificial requisites was situated, a convenient place for begging. One of the gates of the temple is said by the Jewish historian Josephus, who, however, gives neither the name nor the exact location, to have been of peculiar richness in material, Corinthian brass, and execution. Some suppose this to have been the one meant here. The name, certainly, would be entirely fitting.—Ver. 6. **Silver and gold have I none.** In accordance with Christ's injunction (Matt. x. 9). "Centuries after Cornelius à Lapide beautifully relates how Thomas Aquinas once came to Pope Innocent IV. at a moment when the pontiff had before him a great treasure of gold. 'See, Thomas,' said Innocent, 'see, the church can no more say as it did in those first days, Silver and gold have I none?' 'True, holy father,' replied Thomas Aquinas, 'but the church of the present day can hardly say to a lame man what the church of the first days said, Arise and walk' (*Popular Commentary*). The worldly spirit gaining possession of the Church more and more, especially under the popes, certainly was the cause of her losing much of her spiritual, if not miraculous, power. **That give I thee.** Here-with, immediately. **In the name of Jesus Christ,** etc. The fact that Jesus of Nazareth has proved and revealed Himself as the promised Messiah or Christ, and Peter's faith in this revelation, or name of Jesus, was the cause.

that this miracle was wrought. (Comp. ii. 38.)—Ver. 10. **Took knowledge.** Came to know full well, putting questions to him and others.

(B.) THE SECOND SERMON OF PETER.

11-26. And as he held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this man? or why fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Servant Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied before the face of Pilate, when he had determined to release him. But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of life; whom God raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And by faith in his name hath his name made this man strong, whom ye behold and know: yea, the faith which is through him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I wot that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But the things which God foreshewed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; and that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, *even* Jesus: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets which have been since the world began. Moses indeed said, A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me; to him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you. And it shall be, that every soul, which shall not hearken to that prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of these days. Ye are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Servant, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.

The healed man in his gratitude and joyous excitement clinging to his benefactors, the whole multitude, beside themselves with astonishment, ran together by the porch

of Solomon where the apostles now were (11). Then Peter improved the opportunity of addressing them again in a speech as earnest as it was warm-hearted, calling upon them to repent and to believe in Jesus the Christ. In the first place he emphatically disclaims all honor and glory for himself and his fellow-apostle, as if they either by their own power had brought about, or by their piety had merited at the hands of God, that the perfect use of his limbs had so miraculously been granted to the lame man (12). No, the God of the Old Testament covenant and promises has by His wonderful deed glorified Jesus of Nazareth, proving Him to be the Servant of the Lord in the most eminent sense, the Messiah and Redeemer of the world; that man whom they, in blind opposition to God, had delivered up to the Roman procurator as one of the greatest criminals, whose Messiahship they had denied in the very face of this magistrate, and whose crucifixion they had extorted from him against his better judgment (13); that man who alone of all descendants of Adam could defy His enemies to convict Him of only one sin (John viii. 46), and to whom they nevertheless preferred an infamous murderer (14); whom they had put to death, but who, notwithstanding, is and was the author and source of all life (John i. 4) and by His very sufferings and death proved Himself such, and whom therefore God gloriously raised from death, as the apostles could testify, being eye and ear witnesses (15). Nothing but faith in Jesus as the revealed Messiah has brought about this miraculous healing (16). And then, in the second place, the apostle entreats his hearers, whom he loves, of whom he knows that they were not fully conscious of the import of their doings when crucifying Christ, although after Christ's activity among them they ought to have known better (17), and whose conduct was

governed and overruled by an all-wise and almighty God so as to bring about the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the sufferings and death of the Messiah (18)—he entreats them, in consideration of all this, in true repentance and faith to return to the God of their fathers, and thus, through Christ's all-atoning blood, to receive forgiveness of all their sins, and especially of that most grievous sin, the shameful maltreatment and rejection of their Messiah. Then it will be possible for a holy and righteous God to send down unto them times of His spiritual refreshing even here on earth (19) and to grant them perfect happiness when the Messiah, intended for them first of all, comes the second time (20). For after having, in accordance with the wise counsel and decree of God, withdrawn His visible presence from His Christians for some time He will visibly return for the fulfilment of all the promises of God concerning the perfect restitution of the happiness lost through sin (21). Of this Messiah and His work, as also of the necessity of obeying Him in true faith, Moses already has spoken in the well-known passage concerning the prophet whom God was to raise up among the people of Israel, in whom all prophecy was to culminate, both as to revelation and to fulfilment, and who was to be the mediator of a covenant between God and man, as Moses had been, though in a far surpassing manner (22 sq.). And in accordance with this all the prophets have foretold the doings and sufferings of the Messiah as they have been realized in Jesus of Nazareth (24). And now all these prophecies and their basis, the covenant made with Abraham and in him with his descendants, in the first place referred and applied to Peter's hearers, they being the natural children of Abraham and Isaac and hence members of the people of the covenant, though the bless-

ing promised to Abraham was intended for all men (25). Therefore, Peter concludes, for them in the first place God has made His Son man and sent Him to them with all the blessings that as the Servant of God He has acquired, of which they are to become partakers, provided only they return to God in true repentance (26).

**Ver. 11. Porch that is called Solomon's.** A porch, or portico, along the eastern wall of the temple area ; which was said to have remained over from the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar and therefore was called after its original builder. (Comp. John x. 23.)—**Ver. 12. Answered.** · Comp. ver. 9. **Ye men of Israel** (ii. 22). **Why marvel ye at this man?** Or, *this thing*, i. e. this occurrence ; namely, as if the healing had been brought about by men in their own power.—**Ver. 13. The God of Abraham, etc.** Your God in a special sense, to whom you owe all you are and have, in whom you glory as the only true God, who has also given you the promises concerning the Messiah. **Servant Jesus.** Servant here, no doubt, is the correct rendering of the Greek original, which in the first place means *child*, but then also *boy*, *servant*, *slave* ; for as such a *servant* of God, in a special, most eminent sense, the Messiah is described by Isaiah, the Evangelist of the Old Testament, in the second half of his prophetical book (chs. xl.-lxvi. ; comp. Matt. xii. 18). The Son of God became also His Servant in order to save men, the unfaithful and sin-lost servants. **Ye.** Emphatic, as also in the next verse, in contrast, here with God, there with Pilate. **Before the face.** Characterizes the impudence and shamelessness.—**Ver. 14. The Holy and Righteous One.** *Holy* means separated and free from all that is bad and sinful, and consecrated to God and His service ; *righteous*, observing what is right, being such as one ought to be, in accordance with the

will of God. This applies to Christ according to both natures, the divine and the human.—Ver. 15. **The Prince of life.** (Comp. also Heb. ii. 10; xii. 2.) The expression is in contrast both with *murderer* and with *killed*. Spiritual and eternal life, without which natural life has no value, is here, of course, meant principally. **We.** Emphatic; we do not rely on rumors or the unreliable reports of others.—Ver. 16. **By faith in his name hath his name,** etc. Emphatic; *faith* in Jesus the revealed Messiah is the *basis* of the miracle, and the *fact* that Jesus is this Messiah is the *cause* of it. The name of Jesus is Jesus Himself in His revelation and manifestation as the Christ or Messiah; without this revelation, or His name, He would be of no use and benefit to us. (Comp. ii. 38.) **Whom ye behold and know.** Gaze at with amazement and have known for many years. **The faith which is through him.** By Christ's grace and power, manifested in all He had done, His life, teachings, and miracles, His sufferings and death, His resurrection and ascension, the pouring-out of the Holy Ghost, this faith had been kindled and strengthened in the apostles. The *name* of Christ, His revelation as we now have it in the Gospel, and *faith* in this name, go together, are correlatives; what is ascribed to the one, can also be ascribed to the other, truly and justly, though not in the same sense; the *name* of Christ is the *efficient* cause; *faith* in this name, the *instrumental* cause. Hence, it is unbiblical and wrong to separate these two causes; wherever the one is active and operating, the other must also be acknowledged in its correlative sphere. **In the presence of you all.** So that it is a manifest, undeniable fact.—Ver. 17. **Brethren.** Members of the people of God as well as Peter himself. **Wot.** Know (a form of *witan*, the German *wissen*; comp. to wit). **In igno-**



**rance.** Comp. Luke xxiii. 34. **As did also your rulers.** Comp. 1 Cor. ii. 8.—Ver. 18. **Foreshewed.** Announced beforehand. **All the prophets.** All had prophesied, directly or indirectly, of the kingdom of the Messiah, the great hope of Israel, which now was realized by Jesus of Nazareth.—Ver. 19. **Blotted out.** Obliterated, erased, viz. from the book or record of divine omniscience and holiness, so that they are no more taken account of, are not punished. **Seasons of refreshing.** Usually understood of the time after the second appearance of Christ, of the life to come, or also of the so-called millennium; but the omission of the definite article and the plural “seasons” rather point to repeatedly recurring times, brief though they be, when the quickening and refreshing grace of God manifests itself in a special sense, as for example in the first decades of the Christian Church and the times of the reformation. **From the presence of the Lord.** The seasons are regarded as something that exists in the presence of God and is sent down by Him.—Ver. 21. **Whom the heaven must receive.** The *context*, we think, proves this rendering both of the Authorized and the Revised Versions correct, over against the translation of Luther: *Welcher muss den Himmel einnehmen* (“who must take [possession of] the heaven”); though this latter rendering is also perfectly in accordance with *grammar*, the verb, however, nowhere else being used in this sense. But the rendering adopted also by us must be understood in the sense given above; for the Reformed idea that Christ till His second coming is as to His human nature, of which only, properly speaking, the ascension to heaven can be predicated, *shut up* in heaven, is manifestly precluded by Eph. iv. 10: “He that descended is the same also that ascended *far above all the heavens, that He*

*might fill all things.*" Hence, this present passage in no way prejudices the Lutheran doctrine of the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist. Scripture must interpret Scripture, is the old hermeneutical rule; and Eph. iv. 10 tells us distinctly how we must *not* understand Acts iii. 21. We will also mention the following explanation of Luther's translation: "According to the counsel and will of God Jesus must be satisfied with heaven as a gift, where He rules supreme, until the time has come when the complete fulfilment of all divine promises takes place, and all His enemies are made the footstool of His feet." But the first clause of our verse is evidently in contrast with the *sending* of Christ spoken of in the preceding verse; and this contrast is only clear when the heaven is regarded as having received Christ and now holding Him as far as His *visible* presence on earth is concerned, but not at all when it is regarded as having been taken possession of by Him. (Comp. i. 11; Phil. iii. 20.)—Ver. 22. **Moses said.** Deut. xviii. 15 sqq. **Indeed.** Corresponding with **and** in verse 24: on the one hand, in the first place, Moses, the mediator and first prophet of the Old Testament; on the other hand, in the second place, all the prophets following him.—Ver. 23. **Shall be utterly destroyed.** Suffer eternal death.—Ver. 24. **All the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after.** A mixture of two constructions, viz. *All the prophets from Samuel*, and, *all prophets, Samuel and those that followed*. Samuel after Moses opened the train of prophets proper, as the founder of schools of prophets (1 Samuel x. 5, 10; xix. 18 sqq.). Concerning some of his immediate successors mentioned in Holy Writ, compare 2 Sam. vii. 12 sqq.; Acts ii. 30. **They also told of these days.** Comp. Luke xxiv. 27.—Ver. 25. **Ye.** Emphatic, denoting privilege and corre-

sponding duty of receiving the Messiah when come. **The sons . . . of the covenant.** In the most intimate relation to the covenant. (Comp. Matt. viii. 12.) **In thy seed.** Christ, Abraham's seed in the most eminent sense, the flower and head of the whole seed. (Comp. Gal. iii. 16.) He is the cause that Abraham's seed in general, viz. Israel, can be called a blessing to all nations, or **families of the earth**, since to it the real blessing, Christ and all His saving grace, was promised and given in the first place.—Ver. 26. **His Servant.** Comp. ver. 13. **To bless you.** Lit. *blessing you*, as far as He is concerned. **Every one.** Subject, not object, of **turning** : in case every one of you turn away, etc.

## CHAPTER IV.

### (A.) PETER AND JOHN BEFORE THE HIGH COUNCIL.

1-22. And as they spake unto the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, being sore troubled because they taught the people, and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in ward unto the morrow : for it was now eventide. But many of them that heard the word believed ; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem ; and Annas the high priest *was there*, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest. And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, By what power, or in what name, have ye done this ? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders, if we this day are examined concerning a good deed done to an impotent man, by what means this man is made whole ; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* in him doth this man stand here before you whole. He is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner. And in none other is there salvation : for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.

Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled ; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. And seeing the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, saying, What shall we do to these men ? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been wrought through them, is manifest to all that dwell in Jerusalem ; and we cannot deny it. But that it spread no further among the people, let us threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and charged them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to

hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye : for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard. And they, when they had further threatened them, let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people ; for all men glorified God for that which was done. For the man was more than forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was wrought.

Whilst Peter and John were addressing the people, as stated summarily in the latter half of the preceding chapter, they found themselves all at once surrounded by enemies, led by Sadducees (1) who were displeased, and indignant at the apostles, for preaching the resurrection of Jesus, making it the proof for the possibility of a resurrection from the dead, contrary to the Sadducean view (Matt. xxii. 23), and the basis and source of a blessed resurrection for man (2). And the apostles, denounced, no doubt, either as causing a tumultuous concourse of people, or as unlawfully arrogating to themselves the authority of public teaching, were cast into prison to be tried next morning (3). But, notwithstanding, their preaching had made such an impression upon their hearers that the number of the converted men alone rose to about five thousand (4). When on the next day a plenary convention of the High Council had been called (5), the two apostles were cited before it and questioned as to the nature of the power and authority for healing the lame man and thus causing an excitement among the people (7). And then again the promise of Christ concerning the Holy Ghost as the assistant and advocate of His persecuted disciples (Luke xii. 11 sq.) was fulfilled. Peter, who only a few weeks before had thrice denied his Master, from fear of prison and death (Matt. xxvi. 69 sqq.), and afterwards, together with his fellow-disciples, had shut himself up "for fear of the Jews" (John xx. 19, 26), now, filled with the Holy Ghost whom his risen and exalted Saviour had sent, fearlessly

addressed the highest tribunal of his people in a powerful, though brief, speech, not only answering their questions openly and courageously, but also solemnly declaring unto them the only way of salvation (8). Since, he says, he and John are now to be tried on account of a good deed done to a poor sick man—a deed for which praise and thanks are usually accorded,—and since their judges wanted to know what was the real source and cause of the extraordinary cure (9), not only these judges but the whole people may know that faith in Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, so shamefully treated by them, but so gloriously honored by God Himself, was this source and cause (10). For He, indeed, and none other, is the promised Messiah, the foundation and founder of the kingdom of God, though the leaders of the Old Testament people of God in their blindness and perversity have rejected Him (11). Hence He is also the sole source and foundation of salvation for every individual man, since in the whole world there is no second one whom God has revealed and proved to be the object and basis of saving faith (12). When the High Council observed the boldness of the apostles and at the same time had perceived their want of rabbinical and other learning, as both were manifested in the speech of Peter, they could not but be astonished; and they also now recognized them as former companions of Jesus and hence as witnesses of what had taken place with Him (13); and when, besides, they saw the healed man standing with them, a living testimony *for* them, instead of *against* them, as he was doubtless meant to be when cited before the Council, they had no more to say against the statement of the apostles (14). Consequently they dismissed them for the sake of having a private conference among themselves (15). Here they had to acknowledge that

there was not a particle of reason for a judgment against the apostles, since there was no possibility of denying the manifest miracle wrought by them (16). As, however, they wanted by all means to prevent the further spreading of these news so favorable to the doctrine of Christ, they agreed upon strictly enjoining the apostles from making in future the name of Jesus the Christ the basis and subject of their discourse with any man (17). This having been communicated to the apostles in the strictest form (18), they appealed to the judgment of the Council itself whether in the eyes of God it would be right for them to obey the former rather than the latter (19), seeing that they had been constant companions of Christ and hence eye and ear witnesses of what they preached, and knowing that they had been permitted to be such witnesses for the very purpose of afterwards proclaiming what they had seen and heard (20). Hereupon the Council knew nothing better than to increase its threats, since it could not find a mode of punishing them that would be sanctioned by the people who with one accord were praising God for the glorious deed that had been done (21), and which was so much the more glorious because the person healed had been in his crippled condition for more than forty years after his birth (22).

Ver. 1. **The priests.** That were at that time performing the ministrations at the sanctuary. (Comp. Luke i. 5.) **The captain of the temple.** The officer commanding at that time the temple guard, consisting of Levites who had to keep order on the temple place. (Comp. Luke xxii. 4.) **The Sadducees.** Who chanced to be there and were especially provoked by the preaching of the apostles, so contrary to their own distinctive tenets. "This sect rejected all that mass of oral tradition which entered at this period so largely into the teaching of the most popu-

lar Jewish schools. It professed to accept, however, the written word (not merely the books of Moses) as the rule of faith. It affirmed, as their foundation doctrine, that this life was the whole of man's existence. The creed of the Sadducees seems to have been purely materialistic, denying the existence of angel and spirit. Their importance and power at the time was clearly out of proportion to their real numbers, but they included in their ranks many of the influential of the nation. The high priest's family appears to have consisted mainly of Sadducees (Acts v. 17). Josephus mentions another son of Annas, subsequently high priest, as a Sadducee" (HAWSON, in *Popular Comm.*). The Sadducees were the party of high-lived aristocrats, adherents of the priests and partly themselves priests. **Came upon them.** All at once stood by them.—Ver. 2. **Taught the people.** At all; being unauthorized, not members of a rabbinical school. **And proclaimed in Jesus,** etc. This was the special cause. **In Jesus** is the proof and basis of our resurrection.—Ver. 3. **Now.** Already; hence, too late for a trial.—Ver. 4. **Believed.** Became believers.—Ver. 5. **Rulers and elders and scribes.** *Rulers*, the members of the High Council in general, including the three following classes: *elders*, heads of families; *scribes*, recognized teachers and interpreters of the Law; and (ver. 6) *high priests*, including the ruling high priest, those that formerly had occupied the office but had been deposed, and members of the principal priestly families from whom the high priests as a rule were taken, or, as others will have it, the heads of the twenty-four courses of priests. (Comp. Matt. ii. 4; v. 22.)—Ver. 6. **Annas . . . Caiaphas.** (Comp. Matt. xxvi. 3; Luke iii. 2.) The former, father-in-law of the ruling high priest Caiaphas (A. D. 18-36), still wielded the greater influence. **John and Alexander.** Not known; though



some suppose that the former is mentioned in the Talmud as a noted man, and some, again, regard the latter as the brother of the well-known Jewish writer Philo. **As many as were**, etc. This seems to imply that, perhaps because of the importance of the matter, also some who were not members of the Council were called to give advice.—Ver. 7. **In what name**. They were supposed to have used in their formula of healing a name of a different kind of being from those whose names were so used for example by the exorcists (comp. Matt. xii. 27; Acts xix. 13); these used the names of the patriarchs, of Solomon, of God Himself, etc. In the opinion of the High Council the apostles, as wicked men, could not have performed such a miraculous healing by using the name of a holy being as their authority and patron, but only in league with an evil being. (Comp. Matt. xii. 24 sqq.) **Ye**. Emphatic; insignificant men as you seem to be, or at least not belonging to the circle of our pupils and friends, whom we believe to be able to do something extraordinary by the help of God.—Ver. 8. **Then**. Embracing this opportunity of witnessing for his Saviour and calling the leaders of his people to repentance. **Rulers of the people and elders**. Both expressions here apply to all the members of the Council, the second, *elders*, being used in the wider sense, synonymous with the first—a solemn appellation and exordium.—Ver. 9. **We**. Emphatic; we entirely innocent men. **By what means**. More in accordance with the question in verse 7 than the other, equally possible, rendering, *in whom*; the sense, however, is ultimately the same.—Ver. 10. **People of Israel**. Who ought to be the first to recognize and accept the Messiah. (Comp. ii. 22). **Ye**. Emphatic, in strong contrast with **God**; the usual adverbs (*men—de*) are omitted to secure energy of expression. **In him**.

Better than, *in this*, viz. name, because masculine pronouns referring to Christ precede and follow; in the spirited solemnity of speech the person is mentioned instead of the name, since either could be mentioned as the source and cause of the miracle. (Comp. iii. 6.)—Ver. 11. **He is the stone**, etc. Evidently an allusion to Ps. cxviii. 22 (comp. Matt. xxi. 42;—1 Peter ii. 4 sqq.; 1 Cor. iii. 11; Eph. ii. 20). The leaders of the Jews, whose office was to build up the kingdom of God, the spiritual temple, rejected Him on whom the whole building rests, and must rest, if it is to be erected at all.—Ver. 12. **In none other**: there is none of the *same* kind (*allos*); **any other name**: there is none of a *different* kind (*heteron*); hence, there is absolutely no possibility of being saved except in Christ Jesus and His Gospel, the latter containing the revelation or name of Christ. (Comp. ii. 38.) **For neither**. This second clause is to prove and strengthen the first, the stress being on **name**; if God had given man a revelation concerning any one else as being his redeemer and saviour, of course salvation could not be said to have its source solely in Jesus. (Comp. iii. 6.) **Among men**. So that it be found and preached there.—Ver. 13. **Beheld**. With astonishment. **Unlearned**. Without the literary education of the rabbinical teachers. **Ignorant**. In general, without learning. As, however, the education and learning among the Jews in those times as a rule was none other than the rabbinical, having for its object the Scriptures of the Old Testament and the tradition of the elders, the two expressions are here by most regarded synonymous, emphasizing the common idea. (Comp. ver. 8.)—Ver. 14. **Standing**. Which ability he owed to them.—Ver. 16. **A notable miracle**. Manifestly and undeniably a deed that must be regarded as a *sign* and proof of something higher, of a power not their own. (Comp. ii.

22.)—Ver. 17. **Speak.** In general, combining the two expressions used in the next verse.—Ver. 18. **Speak.** Lit. *give out a sound*, speak in general, also in private conversation.—Ver. 19. Comp. v. 29. **In the sight of God.** Lit. *before God*, He being the Judge.—Ver. 20. **We.** Emphatic; whatever *you* may think, or what *others* might do.—Ver. 21. **Glorified.** Continually (Imperfect).—Ver. 22. **Was wrought.** Lit. *had taken place*.

### (B.) WHAT FOLLOWED THE RELEASE OF THE APOSTLES.

23-37. And being let go, they came to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said unto them. And they, when they heard it, lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, O Lord, thou that didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: who by the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of our father David thy servant, didst say,

Why did the Gentiles rage,  
And the peoples imagine vain things?  
The kings of the earth set themselves in array,  
And the rulers were gathered together,  
Against the Lord, and against his Anointed:

for of a truth in this city against thy holy Servant Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel foreordained to come to pass. And now, Lord, look upon their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness, while thou stretchest forth thy hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of thy holy Servant Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken wherein they were gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one of *them* said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. For neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need.

And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, Son of exhortation), a Levite, a man of Cyprus by race, having a field, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

After their release the two apostles went back to their fellow-believers and communicated to them the decision of the Council (23). Then all uniting in a common prayer, addressed the King of kings (24). What He through David had prophesied concerning the vain ravings of the nations and their rulers against the Messiah and the Kingdom of God founded and ruled by Him (25 sq.), had now taken place even in the capital and sanctuary of the chosen people (27); though, with all their enmity, they could not but subserve the almighty will and decree of God concerning man's salvation (28). Hence, under the existing circumstances, the disciples supplicate Him not to permit the threats of their and His enemies to be realized, but to grant to His servants a courageous continuation of their work (29), confirming their preaching by miracles of every nature (30). In manifest approval of their prayer God, in a manner, repeated the extraordinary events of Pentecost, and granted them the courage asked for (31). Just as the external activity of the first Christians could not be checked or changed by the enmity of the Jewish rulers, so also the congregational life remained in its first exemplary condition, notwithstanding circumstances had changed to some extent, especially with regard to number. (Comp. ii. 41 sqq.; iv. 4.) The most complete harmony prevailed among all, as became apparent especially in this that the community of goods was kept up with universal consent (32). And the more powerfully, because the testimony of the mouth was confirmed by that of the life, could the apostles perform their duty of preaching the glad tidings of a risen and hence divinely-approved

Saviour. Nor did the primitive church lack the favor of the, as yet not misled, people (33); for no unprejudiced person could be otherwise than favorably impressed when he saw the fervid mutual love of the Christians manifested, under the guidance of their universally respected and honored teachers, in such an extraordinary way as is shown by the example of Barnabas (34-37).

Ver. 23. **Chief priests and elders.** Comp. ver. 5; as is often the case, not all the classes constituting the Council are mentioned.—Ver. 24. **With one accord.** Here we have perhaps the first formula of a common prayer, which was composed in accordance with the circumstances of those days of constant persecution, and in which all joined, not only with their hearts, but also with their lips. This interpretation is, certainly, more in harmony with the wording of the holy text than the other which makes one, perhaps James (comp. xii. 17), the speaker and the others participants merely in their hearts and by saying, Amen. **Lord.** In Greek *despotes*, Master, Sovereign, Ruler; here in the most eminent sense, denoting Him to whom everybody and everything is subject, since the whole universe owes its very existence to Him, as the next words say, **Thou that didst make**, etc. This already implies the futility of all human opposition and enmity.—Ver. 25 sq. **Who by the Holy Ghost . . . say.** The Greek text of this clause as given in the best manuscripts is unintelligible and seems to be a mixture of different readings, whose meaning is given in the Revised Version. **Why did the Gentiles rage**, etc. Exactly the Septuagint translation of Ps. ii. 1, 2. This Psalm, then, prophecies of the Messiah, being inspired by the Holy Ghost, and hence the true Word of God. **The Gentiles** were represented, in the first fulfilment, by the Romans; **the peoples**, by the tribes and families of

Israel; **the kings of the earth**, by Herod; **the rulers**, by Pilate (ver. 27). And the history of the church, especially in the first centuries of its existence, furnishes a multitude of other examples. **Vain things** in this connection are plans that could never be successful, viz. the extinction of Christ and His Kingdom. A conspiracy **against the Lord and against his Christ**, the One whom He has anointed with the Holy Ghost to be the Saviour of mankind, cannot but be doomed to inglorious and self-destructive failure.—Ver. 27. **Thy holy servant**. (Comp. iii. 13.) **Holy** this Servant is called because He is dedicated to the service of God in a special, the most eminent, sense, and also because there is no vestige of sin and transgression in Him. **Anoint**. Comp. x. 38; Luke iii. 21 sq.; iv. 18.—Ver. 28. (Comp. iii. 18.) **Thy hand**. Figurative expression for the omnipotence of God. (Comp. ver. 30; vii. 50; xiii. 11.) **To do**. That was not their intention; but God ruled it so.—Ver. 29. **Look upon**. As a holy and righteous God cannot but do, in displeasure and with the intention of ultimately prostrating them. **Thy servants**. Who are performing Thy will and command, entirely devoted to Thy service, and therefore entitled to Thy protection. **Thy word**. Not really and ultimately their own. Speaking God's word and doing His will, that is what constitutes a true servant of God; nothing else does.—Ver. 30. **Stretchest forth thy hand**. Manifestest thy divine power. (Comp. ver. 28.) **To heal**. Miraculously, hence also a **sign and wonder**, but mentioned especially because it was the one performed oftenest. (Comp. ii. 19.) **Through the name**. Comp. iii. 6. **Thy holy servant**. Comp. ver. 27.—Ver. 31. **The place was shaken**. God manifesting that He has the earth itself in His omnipotent hands and therefore can and will protect His servants against the mightiest of

men. (Comp. ii. 2-4.)—Ver. 32. **Believed.** Lit. *had become believers*. **One heart and soul.** Most emphatic expression of entire harmony. The **heart** in biblical language is the organ and seat of the **soul**, connecting it with the body, so that heart and soul denotes the whole man. **Not one.** Lit. *not even one*, viz. of all that multitude. **His own.** His exclusive property, so as to withhold it from his fellow-Christians.—Ver. 33. **Gave.** As was their duty and office. **Their witness.** Which they were able and commissioned to give. **The resurrection of the Lord.** The divine attestation and proclamation of the Messiahship and divinity of Jesus. (Comp Rom. i. 4.) **And.** As a natural result and incident. **Grace.** Viz. of God; so understood by many; but that would seem to be superfluous to mention after what was stated in ver. 31. Hence we think the usual interpretation of the *favor* with which the mass of the people so far regarded the Christians preferable, the Greek word being the same as that translated *favor* in ii. 47.—Ver. 34. This proved the sincerity of their profession of faith in Christ and mutual love to one another, and hence impressed the people favorably.—Ver. 35. **Laid them at the apostles' feet.** As teachers and persons of dignity and respect the apostles *sat* (comp. Matt. v. 1; Mark ix. 35; Luke iv. 20); and those gifts were respectfully delivered to them for distribution.—Ver. 36. **Barnabas.** Later on a *prophet* and *teacher* (xiii. 1; comp. xi. 22 sq.; I Cor. xiv. 3), and already now manifesting special gifts in that direction, most of all in exhortation and consolation. His name seems to mean in literal translation, Son (*bar*) of prophecy (*nebuah*), agreeing well with the passages cited, since according to the last one a prophet, or inspired man, was to speak also unto *exhortation*, the very word used here by Luke in explaining the

name.—Ver. 37. Although a native of the island of Cyprus, north-west from Palestine, Barnabas owned a piece of land in the latter country, which Levites were permitted to do (comp. Jer. xxxii. 7 sq. and i. 1), notwithstanding their not having been given an inheritance or portion in the division of the country among the children of Israel (Num. xviii. 20; Deut. x. 9).



## CHAPTER V.

### (A.) THE HYPOCRISY AND PUNISHMENT OF ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA.

1-11. But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power? How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down and gave up the ghost: and great fear came upon all that heard it. And the young men arose and wrapped him round, and they carried him out and buried him.

And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much. And she said, Yea, for so much. But Peter *said* unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and they shall carry thee out. And she fell down immediately at his feet, and gave up the ghost: and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her by her husband. And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things.

In contrast with the unselfish brotherly love evinced by Barnabas and other Christians in placing all their possessions at the disposal of their fellow-believers (iv. 32 sqq.), we here find a married couple that also sold a piece of land (3), but delivered only a part of the price to the apostles, pretending, however, that they had brought it all (1 sq.). Here, then, is the first case of

manifest hypocrisy that we meet in the history of the Christian Church; and in order to show to everyone what a grievous and abominable sin it is in the eyes of God, and ought to be in the eyes of every child of God, and to set a warning example to all, it is here punished severely by God Himself through Peter, the leader of the first Christians. (Comp. i. 13.) By immediate divine illumination he knew at once that Ananias was the willing tool of the liar from the beginning (John viii. 44), and hence asked him why he had opened his heart to the promptings of Satan to try to deceive even the Holy Ghost who manifestly governed the Church through the apostles (3), seeing that he had in no way been compelled either to sell the piece of land, or, having sold it, to hand over any part of the proceeds to the common treasury (ii. 45); and why, instead of withstanding the temptations of the evil one, he had even premeditatedly lied to God, the Holy Ghost, Himself, of whom the apostles simply were the instruments (4). And God sanctioned and confirmed this rebuke by removing at once the hypocrite from the midst of the congregation, to the great fear of all that were present and as a solemn warning to them (5). The younger men in the congregation, appointed, perhaps, to do services of this nature, buried the body (6). Then about three hours later Sapphira came, probably in quest of her long-absent husband (7). Peter addressed her by putting the question, whether in fact they had received for their property just that sum of money that her husband had brought and that still was lying at the feet of the apostles; and she, instead of at least now confessing the truth and repenting of her hypocrisy, repeated the lie, showing thereby that at heart she was just as little a Christian as her husband (8). Peter, having directed her

attention to the wicked condition of heart that had made it possible for her and her husband to plan together the sin they had committed and thus by deliberate hypocrisy to try the Holy Ghost as to whether He knew what they were doing, then announced to her the same punishment that just now had befallen her husband, sudden death (9). And so it took place (10); and the result of this repeated punishment of malicious hypocrisy was the intended one: a salutary fear came not only upon all the Christians, but upon all that heard of the sad occurrence (11).

Ver. 2. **Also being privy to it.** Also knowing it, as well as he.—Ver. 3. **Why.** Ananias should, and could, have withstood the temptation of Satan in the power given by the Holy Ghost to faith, instead of opening his whole heart to him. **To lie.** The object of Satan; and Ananias carried it out, as far as he could.—Ver. 4. **Remained, viz. unsold.** **Was it not in thy power,** viz. the price obtained. Hence, no one was compelled by any rule or regulation to take part in the communion of goods; it was altogether a matter of spontaneous mutual love. (Comp. ii. 44.) And what was not a law even then for the comparatively few Christians, at the time of first, fervent love, much less can be such in our times, so different in almost every respect. Not all that the apostles and first Christians did was a law and rule for other Christians, not even for those under the very same circumstances, since in some matters the apostles and first Christians could also have acted otherwise without sinning against a commandment or rule laid down by Christ. The Lord has not tied down the life of His believers to a multitude of laws and regulations fixing every detail of their conduct. Love to God and their fellow-men, especially their fellow-believers, is their gov-

erning principle, and its manifestation may, yea must, vary in form and detail in accordance with the times and circumstances. **How is it that.** What is the reason that, why. **But unto God.** This, compared with the preceding verse, proves that the Holy Ghost is God. Ananias had certainly also lied to men, namely, the apostles and others; but ultimately and really his sin was directed against God the Holy Ghost, and *as such* it was here regarded and punished. Hence the strong expression, correctly understood, is entirely in place; the expression, *Not so much unto men as unto God*, would weaken the sense that is to be expressed. Comp. Ps. li. 4, where David, after having committed adultery and murder, sins that certainly are directed also against men, says, *Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned*, because the fact that his twofold crime was ultimately and really a most grievous transgression of the will and law of his God and Benefactor was now realized by him.—Ver. 6. **The young men.** Lit. *the younger* ones; in compliance with the will of God as expressed; e. g. 1 Pet. v. 5; Luke xxii. 26. Thus far the necessity of appointing special officers for work of that kind had not yet arisen; love, which is always ready to serve, and especially in the sphere most appropriate and natural, filled the souls of the young as well as of the old. **Wrapped him round.** Namely, “each limb with the linen cloths used in the burying of the dead, sprinkling spices between each fold of the linen” (*Pop. Comm.*), or, more natural under the circumstances, *covered him*, viz. the whole body, the face included. Others retain the usual signification of the Greek verb and translate, *placed together*, or *drew together*, viz. his stiffening limbs, *laid him out*. **Carried him out**, viz. from the city, where only in exceptional cases burials took place. **Buried him.** Immediately, in accordance with Oriental usage, an early

burial being necessary in the hot climate.—Ver. 7. **Three hours.** The time taken up with the burial. (Comp. ver. 9.)—Ver. 8. **Answered.** Began to speak, addressed her, replying not to anything that had been said, but to something that had taken place; an imitation of the Hebrew idiom used in the Septuagint and then also in the New Testament. (Comp. Matt. xi. 25.)—Ver. 9. **Tempt.** Try God's omniscience, power, love, etc., in presumptuousness, audacity, unbelief, etc. (Comp. Matt. iv. 7.) **The feet.** A vivid description (comp. Luke i. 79; Rom. iii. 15; x. 15); perhaps the sound of their steps was just heard.—Ver. 11. **All that heard these things.** This evidently here means more than the similar expression in ver. 5.

#### (B.) THE MIRACULOUS PROGRESS OF THE CHURCH.

12-16. And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. But of the rest durst no man join himself to them: howbeit the people magnified them; and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women; insomuch that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that, as Peter came by, at the least his shadow might overshadow some one of them. And there also came together the multitude from the cities round about Jerusalem, bringing sick folk, and them that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

Whilst the Lord confirmed the preaching of His apostles by the promised signs (Mark xvi. 17 sqq.), the congregation, regularly assembled in the porch of Solomon (iii. 11), was safe from disturbing intrusions of inquisitive or hypocritical outsiders; for, notwithstanding the great veneration shown the Christians by the people, fear inspired by the death of Ananias and Sapphira was preventing all that did not really belong to them from joining them (12 sq.). But so much the more real believers were added,

numbers of both sexes (14). The result of all this was such a confidence in the apostles and their divine mission and power that sick persons were even brought out into the streets in order that at least the shadow of Peter might fall upon them and they might thus be healed—an expectation that, no doubt, was fulfilled, the Lord regarding the incipient faith manifesting itself thereby, and His power not being bound to any particular means (15). Yea, even the inhabitants of the neighboring towns came in great numbers and had their sick healed (16).

Ver. 12. **By the hands.** May be a Hebraism meaning simply *by* or *through*; it may, however, also be used because the apostles as a rule performed their miracles of healing by laying on of hands (comp. Mark xvi. 18), this being a symbol of the benefit conferred. **Signs and wonders.** Comp. ii. 19. **All.** The Christians, not only the apostles. (Comp. ii. 1.)—Ver. 13. **Of the rest.** Those that had not yet become Christians; the same as **the people** mentioned afterwards, not the common Christians, who by some are supposed to have stood in such awe of the apostles that they did not dare to commune with them—a supposition that is in direct opposition to the spirit of Christianity. (Comp. Matt. xxiii. 8 sqq.) **Howbeit.** Although; lit. *but* (nevertheless); hence the keeping aloof from the Christians (not simply the apostles) had not its cause in contempt and the like. **Magnified.** *Esteemed highly*, and in consequence, lauded, extolled, celebrated.—Ver. 14. **The more.** By the attitude of the people. **To the Lord.** As the Head of the Church, which is His body (comp. xi. 24); though these words could also be connected with **believers** (comp. xvi. 34), so that the sense would be, *Believers in the Lord were added*, viz. to the Church. (Comp. ii. 47.)—Ver. 15. As to the various modes of miraculous healing comp. **xix.**

12; Matt. ix. 20 sqq.; viii. 3.—Ver. 16. **Sick folk.** Of the common nature, from *natural* causes. The **vexed with unclean spirits** were also sick, but their sickness was the result of demoniacal possession. This passage is a proof that these two differed in kind, as to the ultimate causes, and not merely in degree, as Rationalists and others have claimed. (Comp. viii. 7; Luke iv. 40 sq.; Matt. iv. 24.)

### (C.) RENEWED PERSECUTIONS OF THE APOSTLES.

17-42. But the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with jealousy, and laid hands on the apostles, and put them in public ward. But an angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them out, and said, Go ye, and stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this Life. And when they heard *this*, they entered into the temple about daybreak, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison-house to have them brought. But the officers that came found them not in the prison; and they returned, and told, saying, The prison-house we found shut in all safety, and the keepers standing at the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within. Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were much perplexed concerning them whereunto this would grow. And there came one and told them, Behold, the men whom ye put in the prison are in the temple standing and teaching the people. Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them, *but* without violence; for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, saying, We straightly charged you not to teach in this name: and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. But Peter and the apostles answered and said, We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree. Him did God exalt with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and *so is* the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

But they, when they heard this, were cut to the heart, and were minded to slay them. But there stood up one in the council, a Pharisee, named

Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in honour of all the people, and commanded to put the men forth a little while. And he said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves as touching these men, what ye are about to do. For before these days rose up Theudas, giving himself out to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were dispersed, and came to nought. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the enrolment, and drew away *some of the* people after him: he also perished; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered abroad. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will be overthrown: but if it is of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them; lest haply ye be found even to be fighting against God. And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles unto them, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. They therefore departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the Name. And every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ.

The miraculous activity of the apostles and the consequent spreading of the Gospel and the Church no longer permitted the high priest and the allied party of the Sadducees to remain inactive: full of zeal for their position and dignity and of hatred of Jesus and His disciples, they caused the apostles to be seized and put into the public prison (17 sq.). But God showed His power to help His servants out of every danger, miraculously delivering them by an angel and commanding them frankly and courageously to preach on the very temple place the Gospel, that means and source of a life that gladdened their hearts, and to whose spreading they had consecrated themselves (19 sq.). Whilst they were obeying this command the high priest and his companions repaired to the meeting place of the Grand Council and had all the members of this tribunal called together for an extraordinarily important session, and then sent for the apostles to be tried (21). The officers, indeed, found the prison securely locked and the guards at their



posts, but no prisoners; and returned with this news (22 sq.). The result was general embarrassment, the tormenting question occurring to all what these miraculous events connected with the apostles might yet lead to (24). Then some one came with the surprising news that the prisoners were openly and frankly preaching on the temple place as formerly (25). Now the commander of the temple guard with his officers brought them, though he did not dare to use any violence, since there was reason to fear that the people would, perhaps by open rebellion, resent any further maltreatment of their favorites (26). Having been placed before the Council, they were rebuked by the president for having, against all expectations, so flagrantly disregarded the strict injunction no more to make the revelation of Jesus as the Christ the basis and subject of their preaching, and for evidently desiring to make the Council responsible in the eyes of the people for the crucifixion of Him whose name he does not even deign to mention (27 sq.). Hereupon Peter, in the name of all the apostles, in the first place, emphatically repeats the reply given under similar circumstances, namely, that the commandment of God must supersede that of men (29). Moreover, it is the manifest will of God that the apostles should preach the Gospel of Jesus the Christ; for this very God of the Old Testament covenant and promises has raised from the dead this Jesus who by the people of the covenant was indeed not only not received, but even murdered most shamefully (30), and has, in His omnipotence, made Him the Ruler of the kingdom of heaven and the Saviour of mankind, in order that by His Spirit He might bring men to repentance and thus be able to impart to them forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation (31). And the apostles are the very men whom God has made witnesses of all

this, together with the Holy Ghost who is given to them as to all believers in Christ, endowing them with wisdom, courage, and miraculous gifts (32). This frank and solemn answer of the apostles provoked the Council exceedingly, and they deliberated about putting them to death (33). But this was opposed by one of the most respected and shrewd members of the tribunal, Gamaliel. In private conference with his colleagues he called upon them to be careful with regard to their procedure against these men (34 sq.). Two cases of recent history could teach them that such movements finally meet with an inglorious collapse, if they simply pretend to be of divine origin (36 sq.). And they could safely apply this also to the case in hand; hence, it would be the most prudent course to let the apostles go unpunished and unmolested (38), seeing also that a different course would involve the risk of not merely not accomplishing anything, but even of fighting against God Himself, and of incurring His displeasure and punishment, in case this new movement should after all, contrary to expectation, prove to be of divine origin (39). This cautious, politic advice approved itself to the judgment of the Council, and the apostles were set free, not, however, before they were subjected to the common, but cruel and ignominious punishment of beating and were again enjoined from preaching the Gospel of Jesus the Christ (40). But they regarded this, in human eyes, shameful treatment, since they had to undergo it simply because of their confessing Jesus as the Christ, as a great honor, of which they had reason to be glad and proud (41), and hence continued their work of teaching, and especially preaching the Gospel of Jesus the Christ, every day, both in public and in private (42).

Ver. 17. **The high priest.** According to iv. 6 Annas. **Rose up.** Began to take measures, thinking it high time

to interfere—a vivid description of his now commencing activity. **Sect.** The word in the Greek (*hairesis*) means a *choice*; a *chosen opinion* or *tenet*; a body of men separating themselves from others and following their own tenets (a *sect* or *party*), sometimes with a suggestion of reproach. In the New Testament (Gal. v. 20; 1. Cor. xi. 19) it also denotes a *dissension* arising from diversity of opinions and aims (GRIMM-THAYER). **Sadducees.** Comp. iv. 1.—Ver. 20. **Stand.** Including boldness and frankness. (Comp. ii. 14.) **In the temple.** The most public as well as holy place. (Comp. ii. 46.) **To the people.** Publicly, to all that could and would hear. **All the words of this life.** The whole revelation of God through Christ as the only way to life spiritual and eternal, a life manifest in the apostles and continually preached by them. (Comp. John vi. 68.)—Ver. 21. **And all the senate of the children of Israel.** Seems to be only another, honorary, expression for **Council**, the *latter* term denoting the *functions* of this body, viz. to *meet* for deliberating and passing resolutions, the *former* pointing to its standing and *dignity*, composed, as it was, of the *older and experienced men* (*senate* from *senex*, old man,=the Greek *gerousia* from *geron*, old man,=alderman=older man); some, however, suppose that because of the importance of the matter not only those elders were called who were members of the Council, but all of them. (Comp. iv. 5 sq.)—Ver. 24. **The captain of the temple** (iv. 1). He was the first person to be notified, having, no doubt, superintended the seizure and imprisonment of the apostles, since he was the superintendent of the public prison, and consequently responsible for the prisoners. **Whereunto this would grow.** Lit. *what this might come to be*.—Ver. 25. **In the temple standing**, etc. In strict obedience to the divine command (20).—Ver. 27. **Asked them.** It

was a question not in form, but in meaning ; for the high priest wanted them to explain what moved them to act as they did.—Ver. 28. **Straitly.** Strictly, sternly. **In this name,** lit. *upon this name.* (Comp. iv. 17.) **Bring this man's blood upon us.** Have it avenged upon us by perhaps even causing an uproar of the people.—Ver. 29. **We must obey,** etc. (Comp. iv. 19.) The maxim is here enunciated in its most emphatic and general form ; lit. *it is necessary to obey,* etc.—Ver. 30. **The God of our fathers.** What He does is surely in accordance with His promise and ought to be reverently accepted by the children of those fathers. (Comp. iii. 13.) **Ye slew.** Comp. ii. 23. **Ye.** Emphatic ; Pilate and others were simply their assistants and instruments (Matt. xxvii. 1 sq. 15 sqq.). **Hanging him on a tree.** The most ignominious and painful death of crucifixion. (Comp. Gal. iii. 13.)—Ver. 31. **With his right hand.** Comp. iv. 28. **A prince and a saviour.** Comp. ii. 36 ; iii. 15. **To Israel.** In the first place, as the people of the covenant ; but not alone. (Comp. ii. 39 ; Rom. i. 16.)—Ver. 32. **We.** Emphatic ; hence the rule laid down in verse 29 (comp. iv. 19. 20) applies in this case. **These things.** Both of the sufferings and death and of the resurrection and exaltation of Christ. **And so is the Holy Ghost.** Comp. John xv. 26 sq. ; Acts xv. 28 ; Rom. viii. 16.—Ver. 33. **Were cut to the heart.** Lit. *were torn asunder,* rent with vexation and anger ; a stronger expression than *sore troubled* (iv. 2). **Were minded.** Lit. *wished,* desired, according to the reading of some copies ; *took counsel,* according to that of others. The preponderance of authority seems to be in favor of the former reading.—Ver. 34. **Gamaliel.** The teacher of St. Paul (xxii. 3), probably identical with the celebrated grandson of Hillel (comp. note on Matt. xix. 3), regarded by the Jews as one of the seven greatest

teachers of the Law, and by later Christian tradition represented as already at this time a secret Christian, like Nicodemus (John xix. 38 sq.), and afterwards, together with the latter and his own son, baptized by Peter and John. **Doctor.** Teacher. **Put the men forth.** Comp. iv. 15.—Ver. 35. **Men of Israel.** Comp. ii. 22. **As touching these men.** Could belong to the following words, occupying an emphatic position, *What ye are about to do as touching these men.* Yet the construction of the R. V. is the usual as also the natural one, if we do not connect it with both the preceding and the following clauses, supplying it once, which, certainly, is not impossible.—Ver. 36. **Theudas.** The person of this name meant here is said to have come forth with grand pretensions **before these days**, that is, some time ago, and to have found a comparatively *small number* of adherents; he cannot, therefore, be identical with a similar character of the same name whom Josephus mentions as, *ten years later*, having claimed to be a prophet and misleading a *very great number* of Jews; moreover, neither the name Theudas nor such an occurrence was uncommon in those troublous and excited times. Hence, there is not the least necessity for assuming here, as some do that have laxer views with regard to inspiration, a chronological or historical mistake of Luke. **Somebody.** A man of great importance. **Slain.** No doubt by the Romans. **Came to naught.** Did not succeed in their undertaking, some, perhaps, being even put to death, others at least imprisoned.—Ver. 37. **Judas.** Born at Gamala in Gaulonitis, east of the Sea of Galilee, but called a Galilean, also by Josephus, because he as a rule lived and labored in Galilee. After the deposition of Archelaus (comp. Matt. xxvii. 2), about A. D. 6, he violently opposed the second enrolment conducted by Quirinius. (Comp. Luke

ii. 2.) **Drew away.** Excited to revolt.—Ver. 38. **Refrain.** Stand aloof, keep away, cease vexing them. **This counsel or (rather) this work.** The counsel or plan was already being executed; one and the same thing is designated as to its different sides. (Comp. verse 21.)—Ver. 39. **Overthrow them.** Bring to naught, render fruitless and in vain their endeavors. **Lest haply.** Supply before these words the idea, *be careful*. **Haply.** Perhaps.—Ver. 40. **Beat them.** To satisfy the disobeyed authority of the council.—Ver. 41. **Name.** In an eminent sense, *Jesus the revealed Christ*. (Comp. iii. 6; iv. 10; ii. 38.)—Ver. 42. **To teach and to preach,** etc. The former included especially the latter, but also the teaching of the Law and repentance.

## CHAPTER VI.

### (A.) THE ELECTION OF THE SEVEN ASSISTANTS.

1-7. Now in these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables. Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will continue stedfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude : and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch : whom they set before the apostles : and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

And the word of God increased ; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly ; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Not even in the primitive Church that possessed such extraordinary gifts and gained so many a victory over its opponents was sin altogether lacking : the first Christians were just as little perfect as the members of the Church militant ever have been or ever will be here on earth. When the number of Christians was constantly increasing and in consequence accurate supervision grew difficult, it became manifest that the wonted insolence and contempt of those Jews that spoke the Hebrew language over against those that used the Greek had also found entrance into the Church. The Christian converts of the latter class began to complain that the widows

belonging to them did not receive the proper regard in the daily distribution of provisions incident to the community of goods that, in a manner, at that time prevailed in the Church at Jerusalem (1; comp. ii. 44 sq.). As this complaint evidently had some foundation, the apostles, as the natural leaders of the Church, thought it best from now on to have some appointed official assistants for this matter, whose impartiality and equity could be trusted. But, notwithstanding their exceptionally high position, they did not simply themselves appoint these assistants; on the contrary, for an example to be followed by all their successors in the preaching of the Gospel, they called together all the members of the congregation and pointed out to them the impropriety of their, the apostles', devoting their time and energy to the distribution of provisions, and thereby necessarily to some extent neglecting their proper office, the preaching of the Gospel (2). At the same time they called upon the congregation to look about among themselves for seven men bearing a good reputation and endowed with the gifts of the Holy Ghost not merely in general, but especially with that here most necessary gift of practical wisdom, so that they, the apostles, as the executive organs of the primitive Church, might then solemnly introduce them into their office (3). The apostles themselves, however, would devote all their time and power to their proper office (4). This proposition met with the unanimous consent of the congregation, and they elected the desired number. Among these Stephen was eminent by virtue of his strong faith and wealth of spiritual gifts (5). These men the congregation presented to the apostles as their choice, and these installed them by prayer and laying on of hands (6). And now, this obstacle also having been removed, the Gospel and the



Church spread rapidly, even a great number of priests openly confessing their faith in Jesus the Christ (7).

**Ver. 1. Grecian Jews.** Those that lived in heathen lands and consequently spoke the Greek language, then the language of the world as a result of the conquests of Alexander the Great; they also lacked that strictness and zeal with regard to tradition (comp. Matt. v. 21) that characterized the other class, the *Hebrews*, that is, those Jews that spoke the Hebrew language, or rather, at that time, the Aramaic, a sister language of the Hebrew, which since the Babylonian captivity had gradually become the vernacular of Palestine (comp. i. 23; ii. 9; xxi. 40), and who mostly lived in this country. The Christian converts of the former class evidently, and naturally at that time and place, formed the minority. Their complaint was so far only **a murmuring**, that is, they complained of unbrotherly treatment, as it would seem, as yet only among themselves and in whispers. (Comp. 1 Pet. iv. 9.) **Neglected.** *Overlooked*, slighted.—

**Ver. 2. The multitude.** Of course, only those of age, in accordance with the spirit of the fourth commandment and the apostolic injunction (Eph. vi. 1; Col. iii. 20); and only the male members, the exclusion of women being based on the natural law and the primitive ordination of God, which is not simply expressed in the Old Testament (Gen. iii. 16), but also confirmed in the New (1 Tim. ii. 11 sqq.)—a natural and proper subordination of woman that finds expression also in the custom of all ancient nations. **It is not fit.** Lit. *it is not pleasing*, we do not like, because it is not the proper thing; and the less so the more the number of Christians increased. **Serve tables.** Superintend those matters that pertain to food and other bodily wants.—**Ver. 3. Brethren.** Equal to the apostles in all essentials and hence not their subjects.

**From among you.** Is best construed with **men**=men of your own number, belonging to you; not with **look ye out**=look (about) for. **Seven.** The holy number, occurring so often in the Old Testament especially, from creation on, symbolic, as some think, of the operation and works of God upon earth, who created the universe in six days and rested after its completion on the seventh. No other reason can with any certainty be stated for the number seven here; though some have supposed that the Church at Jerusalem now counted seven thousand members, or was divided into seven districts, each thousand, or district, having now its own superintendent. **Business.** Or, *necessity, need, want*, this being even the original signification of the Greek word.—Ver. 4. **We.** Emphatic; leaving those external matters to these our assistants. **Prayer.** A most necessary and salutary occupation, especially for a minister of the Gospel, to which St. Paul not merely exhorted (e. g. 1 Tim. ii. sqq.), but which he also faithfully practised, as is shown by the introduction of almost all his Epistles (e. g. Rom. i. 8; 1 Cor. i. 4; 2 Cor. i. 3; Eph. i. 3). **Ministry of the word.** Preaching and teaching, in public and in private. This **ministry of the word** is opposed, as an entirely different office, to the *serving tables*, or **ministering to tables**, the two words having also in Greek the same root (*diakonia* and *diakonein*). Still, this is not to be understood in an absolutely exclusive sense, since, as the sequel shows (ver. 8 sqq.; viii. 5 sqq.), these assistants, or *deacons* (a word derived from the above-mentioned Greek words, though the corresponding concrete noun, *diakonos*, is never applied to these seven in the N. T.), were not excluded from all preaching. They, however, did not preach by virtue of their office given them here, but as Christians and members of the royal priesthood (1 Pet. ii. 9), as

missionaries. (Comp. viii. 4 sqq. ; xxi. 8.)—Ver. 5. **Pleased.** Lit. *was pleasing in the sight of.* (Comp. iv. 19). **Philip.** Comp. viii. 5 sqq. ; xxi. 8. **Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch.** At first a heathen, then a Jew (comp. viii. 27 ; ii. 10), then a Christian, and finally, as the Church fathers state, the author of the Gnostic sect called Nicolaitans, mentioned in Rev. ii. 6, 14 sq. Of the rest we know nothing definite. In this list, as in that of the apostles (Matt. x. 2 sqq., etc.), the most prominent men are mentioned first, and the reprobate last, the latter also being designated by the place of his nativity or abode. That among the number of the apostles as well as among that of these assistants one was found to be a reprobate teaches us that the Church here on earth will never be free from hypocrites (Matt. xiii. 24 sqq. ; 47 sqq.), and that even the most prominent members of the Church are in need of watchfully and prayerfully heeding the word of earnest admonition, *Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall* (1 Cor. x. 12).—Ver. 6. **Prayed.** Especially in behalf of those seven men. **Laid their hands on them.** In accordance with an Old Testament usage prescribed by God Himself (Num. xxvii. 18 ; Deut. xxxiv. 9, etc.), not obligatory, of course, for the New Testament time of fulfilment and reality, but still used as an appropriate symbol of the transference of an office with its privileges and duties and of the communication of the divine gifts necessary and desired for the salutary performance of that office. (Comp. xiii. 3 ; 1 Tim. iv. 14 ; v. 22 ; 2 Tim. i. 6.)—Ver. 7. **A great company of the priests.** Concerning the great number of priests, comp. Ezra ii. 36-39 ; concerning the fact, John xii. 42. **Were obedient to the faith.** Faith is the way, order, and rule of salvation, and as such must be submitted to and obeyed (comp. Rom. i. 5).

## (B.) THE PROSECUTION OF STEPHEN.

8-15. And Stephen, full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and signs among the people. But there arose certain of them that were of the synagogue called *the synagogue* of the Libertines, and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake. Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and *against* God. And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and seized him, and brought him into the council, and set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak words against this holy place, and the law: for we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us. And all that sat in the council, fastening their eyes on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

To Stephen, the most prominent of the Seven (3 sqq.), divine grace and power had been vouchsafed in a special measure, and in consequence he performed extraordinarily wondrous deeds (8). Against him arose members of two groups of foreign Jews, trying to refute his preaching (9); but, in consequence of his divine qualification for his office (3 sq.), they could not prevail against him (10). Then they resorted to the same despicable expedient that had been used against Christ (Matt. xxvi. 59 sqq.), secretly instructing men to accuse him of having uttered blasphemous, irreverent words against the institutions of the Old Testament ordained by God Himself through Moses (11). Thereby they stirred up the common people, as also their leaders, and then suddenly seized Stephen and dragged him before the High Council (12). There they produced the suborned witnesses who maliciously exaggerated and perverted what he had said concerning the prophecies of Christ as to the abolition of the Old Testament form of worship and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (13 sq.). But Stephen did not by any

means present the pitiable figure of a man convicted of blasphemy and tormented by his own conscience ; on the contrary, his face was the image of celestial happiness and joy, as can be the case only with a man that is conscious of his innocence and the favor of God (15).

Ver. 8. **Wonders and signs.** Comp. ii. 19. **Wrought.** Not only once, or now and then, but continually (Imperfect).—Ver. 9. **The Libertines, the Cyrenians, and the Alexandrians** formed the first group that had a synagogue in common at Jerusalem. The *Libertines* were Jews that had been taken to Rome as prisoners of war and then had again been set free, either returning to their native country, or staying at Rome. The *Cyrenians* were from Cyrene, the capital of Upper Libya in North Africa, the fourth part of whose inhabitants were Jews. (Comp. ii. 10.) The *Alexandrians* had their home at Alexandria, that celebrated city of Northern Egypt, founded by Alexander the Great, two of the five divisions of which city were inhabited by Jews, and where also the Hellenistic, or Jewish Greek, learning had its principal seat. They of **Cilicia and Asia** formed the second group, having also a synagogue in common. *Cilicia*, in the south-eastern corner of Asia Minor, was the home of Paul (xxii. 3); *Asia* is also here the name for the western coast of Asia Minor. (Comp. ii. 9.) A **synagogue** was a place of worship that seems to have originated during the Babylonish exile, when the Jews could no more worship God in His appointed sanctuary, the temple. After the return from Babylon these synagogues were retained for the purpose of publicly reading and explaining the Law, independently of the regular sacrificial worship in the temple. (Comp. Neh. viii. 1 sq.) “At the time of Jesus there was at least one synagogue in every moderate-sized town of Palestine (such as Nazareth, Capernaum,

etc.), and in the cities of Syria, Asia Minor, and Greece, in which Jews resided. Larger towns possessed several synagogues; and it is said that there were no fewer than 460, or even 480, of them in Jerusalem itself."—Ver. 11. **Blasphemous words.** As given in detail in verses 13 sq. —Ver. 12. **The elders and the scribes.** The civil and religious leaders of the people, members, at least in part, of the High Council. (Comp. iv. 5.) **Came upon him.** (Comp. iv. 1.) Having prepared the people for it in the way stated, they could dare to do so.—Ver. 13 sq. **False witnesses.** Those spoken of verse 11. **This holy place.** The temple. (Comp. Matt. xxvi. 61;—Matt. xxiv. 1 sqq.) **Law . . . customs.** (Comp. John iv. 21.) The change of *customs*, i. e. sacrifices and the celebration of the high festivals at the sanctuary (Ex. xxiii. 17), were, at least in part, a result of the destruction of the holy *place*. **This man . . . this Jesus of Nazareth.** Contemptuously. (Comp. Matt. ii. 23.) **Words.** Blasphemous words (11). **Moses.** Emphatic position in Greek; that most eminent prophet, the mediator of the Old Testament covenant.—Ver. 15. **Fastening their eyes on him.** Eager to hear his reply to these, in their eyes, most grievous charges. (Comp. iii. 4.)

## CHAPTER VII.

### (A.) THE DEFENCE OF STEPHEN BEFORE THE COUNCIL.

1-53. And the high priest said, Are these things so? And he said, Brethren and fathers, hearken. The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said unto him, Get thee out of thy land, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Haran: and from thence, when his father was dead, God removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell: and he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: and he promised that he would give it to him in possession, and to his seed after him, when *as yet* he had no child. And God spake on this wise, that his seed should sojourn in a strange land, and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil, four hundred years. And the nation to which they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place. And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so *Abraham* begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob, and Jacob the twelve patriarchs. And the patriarchs, moved with jealousy against Joseph, sold him into Egypt: and God was with him, and delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom before Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. Now there came a famine over all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance. But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent forth our fathers the first time. And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's race became manifest unto Pharaoh. And Joseph sent, and called to him Jacob his father, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls. And Jacob went down into Egypt; and he died, himself, and our fathers; and they were carried over unto Shechem, and laid in the tomb that Abraham bought for a price in silver of the sons of Hamor in Shechem. But as the time of the promise drew nigh, which God vouchsafed unto Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, till there arose another king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. The same dealt subtilly with our race, and evil entreated our fathers, that they

should cast out their babes to the end they might not live. At which season Moses was born, and was exceeding fair; and he was nourished three months in his father's house: and when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; and he was mighty in his words and works. But when he was well-nigh forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel. And seeing one of *them* suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, smiting the Egyptian: and he supposed that his brethren understood how that God by his hand was giving them deliverance; but they understood not. And the day following he appeared unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another? But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? Wouldst thou kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian yesterday? And Moses fled at this saying, and became a sojourner in the land of Midian, where he begat two sons. And when forty years were fulfilled, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush. And when Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold, there came a voice of the Lord, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob. And Moses trembled, and durst not behold. And the Lord said unto him, Loose the shoes from thy feet: for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. I have surely seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and have heard their groaning, and I am come down to deliver them: and now come, I will send thee into Egypt. This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? him hath God sent *to be* both a ruler and a deliverer with the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush. This man led them forth, having wrought wonders and signs in Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years. This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me. This is he that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received living oracles to give unto us: to whom our fathers would not be obedient, but thrust him from them, and turned back in their hearts unto Egypt, saying unto Aaron, Make us gods which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, which led us forth out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And they made a calf in those days, and brought a sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their hands. But God turned, and gave them up to serve the hosts of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets,

Did ye offer unto me slain beasts and sacrifices

Forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?



And ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch,  
 And the star of the god Rephan,  
 The figures which ye made to worship them :  
 And I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

Our fathers had the tabernacle of the testimony in the wilderness, even as he appointed who spake unto Moses, that he should make it according to the figure that he had seen. Which also our fathers, in their turn, brought in with Joshua when they entered on the possession of the nations, which God thrust out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David ; who found favour in the sight of God, and asked to find a habitation for the God of Jacob. But Solomon built him a house. Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in *houses* made with hands ; as saith the prophet,

The heaven is my throne,  
 And the earth the footstool of my feet :  
 What manner of house will ye build me ? saith the Lord :  
 Or what is the place of my rest ?  
 Did not my hand make all these things ?

Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost : as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute ? and they killed them which shewed before of the coming of the Righteous One ; of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers ; ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not.

The high priest, as president of the Council, put the question to Stephen, whether the charges preferred against him were correct (1). His answer, briefly summarized, was as follows : I am neither a blasphemer of God, nor of Moses and the Law given through him, nor of the temple. On the contrary, I acknowledge the God of our fathers as my God (vers. 2-16), Moses as the law-giver and mediator of the covenant made by God with our fathers (vers. 17-43), and the temple as the place of the special manifestation of God's grace and glory for the time of the preparation (vers. 44-50). Hence my standing here before you, charged with blasphemy, is not owing to any criminal conduct of mine, but solely to your wickedness, since, following the bad example of your fathers at the time of Joseph (9), Moses (35), and

the prophets (52), you prove yourselves the obstinate opponents of God's servants and messengers, rejecting Christ and His Gospel. This charge against them he makes good by giving a brief, but vivid, survey of the history of Israel in its leading and pertinent features.

In the first place, he speaks of the *patriarchs*, in particular of *Abraham*, the ancestor of the Jewish people, how God called him in Mesopotamia (2) to go, under divine guidance, to a country entirely unknown to him (3), and how thus he finally settled in Palestine (4), though God did not as yet give him any part of this country for his own possession, but only promised it to his descendants, of whom he did not even have any human prospect (5). And also these descendants should first, for about 400 years, live in a foreign country, Egypt, and there be maltreated as slaves, thus growing up into a people in strict separation from heathen nations (6), and then be delivered and brought into the promised land, there to serve the Lord as His chosen people (7). For a sign and seal of the covenant thus made by God with Abraham as the ancestor and representative of the people God instituted circumcision (8). Among the children of Abraham's grandson, however, there already manifested itself the selfish, envious, and rebellious nature of the nation, which prompted the brothers of Joseph to sell him as a slave, whilst God, by giving him extraordinary wisdom, made him the favorite of Pharaoh and the second man in the kingdom of Egypt (9 sq.); and thus he became the instrument of God to bring his father's family into that foreign country where they were to become a people (11-14). Jacob and his sons, indeed, died in this foreign country (15); but they were buried in the land of promise, as a proof of their faith in the promise of the future possession of this land by their seed (16).

This God of the patriarchs and their descendants Stephen recognizes and believes in, and hence cannot be charged with blaspheming Him; but his opponents ought to see that their conduct toward Jesus and His disciples is but an imitation of the *bad* traits of the patriarchs.

In the second place, Stephen speaks of *Moses* whom God raised up at the very time when the promise given to Abraham was to be fulfilled. The descendants of Jacob had now become a people, and a king of a new dynasty, who did not or would not know anything about Joseph and what he had done for Egypt, was ruling the country. Fearing the foreign nation in the midst of his country, he tried, by cunning and open violence, to weaken them in number, power, and courage, and at last even compelled them to expose their own infants (17-19). Then Moses was born. Being an exceedingly fair child, his parents the more desired to save him and managed to hide him for a quarter of a year (20); but at last they were compelled to obey, in part, the cruel decree of the king. God, however, so ordered it that the king's own daughter became the boy's foster-mother (21); and thus he received an education, among a people even at that time eminent in wisdom and learning, which afterwards qualified him in the hands of God to become the powerful leader in word and deed that history shows him to have been (22). At the age of forty he, a member of the royal family, concluded to visit his people, the hated and maltreated Israelites—a proof that his Egyptian royal education had not made him unfaithful to his people and the promises given them (23; comp. Heb. xi. 24 sqq.). His unexpected courageous defence of an abused Israelite, violent and unlawful, and consequently sinful, as it was, ought yet to have directed the attention of his people to him as the probable divinely-sent deliv-

erer ; but here already we meet the obtuseness and blindness of the people over against the government and manifestation of God (24 sq.). Moses had even to suffer the sad experience that his attempt on the next day amicably to mediate between two Israelites of whose quarrel he became an unexpected witness (26) was ungratefully and disdainfully resented by the main offender ; and this at least with the silent consent of the people (27 sq.). This had to convince him that his well-meant plans of delivering the people were at least premature. Hence he fled from the vengeance of the suspicious king into the country of the Midianites, where he lived as a stranger and founded a family (29). Again, after forty years, in the desert surrounding Mount Sinai the Lord Himself appeared to him, in the form of an angel, but in the majesty of the Holy One (30), announcing Himself as the God of the patriarchs, whose self-revelation is to be treated with the utmost reverence by every creature, especially by sinful man (31 sqq.), and who now was about to end the misery of His people, and this by this very Moses after a probation of many years had humbled his self-will and chastened his manly courage (34). Thus that very man whom the Jews would not recognize as ruler and judge was now by God appointed and commissioned as the ruler *and deliverer* of the people, God Himself being his guide and strength, so that he could, by many miraculous deeds, lead the people out of Egypt and through the Red Sea and the desert (35 sq.). He was also the one that gave expression to that remarkable prophecy concerning the great Prophet (37). Moreover, he was the mediator between God and the people when the Law was given on Mount Sinai (38). And yet Moses had to experience the disobedience and ingratitude of the people who in their hearts could not and would not

altogether renounce Egyptian idolatry (39), but compelled weak Aaron, during the forty days' stay of Moses on the mount, to make for them a golden calf that, as a symbol of God and a substitute for Moses, their disappeared leader, should be their guide and mediator (40 sq.). This, of course, could not but rouse the holy anger of God who permitted them to fall into gross idolatry; and this idolatry they practised to such an extent that the services at the sanctuary were not worth mentioning since with the mass of the people they were merely official and perfunctory. But this was simply a sample of their rebellious conduct that finally compelled God to expel them from the land of promise (42 sq.). And the both natural and spiritual descendants of this people were the opponents of Stephen. Such was the conduct of the fathers at the time of Moses, and such was the conduct of their children at the time of Stephen, whom they were trying as a blasphemer of Moses and the Law given through him!

And as Stephen recognized Moses as the mediator of the divine Law, so in the third place he also took the correct position with regard to the *temple*. God Himself had commanded Moses, soon after the departure from Egypt, to make a sanctuary, the tabernacle (44). This tabernacle those that under Joshua took possession of the promised land received as a sacred inheritance from their fathers, and took it with them; and thus it was the sanctuary of the people up to the time of David (45). He, in grateful confidence in the grace of God that he had so richly enjoyed, asked for the further grace of being permitted to build, instead of the holy tent, an immovable habitation as the meeting-place of the Lord and His people (46). But not he was to do it; it was rather left to his son Solomon, a type of Christ in this

respect (47). This, however, was not done in the sense of the Jews, as if the Almighty and Omnipotent Creator and Ruler of the Universe would bind His grace, not only in a manner during the time of preparation, but forever, to a building erected by men (48-50). Thus also Stephen's position with regard to the temple, and not that of his opponents, was the correct one.

And now, after having purged himself, at least before any just and impartial judge, of all the charges of his enemies, Stephen openly takes the offensive, telling them in the most unmistakable terms, who is to blame for their hostile attitude towards him. Obstinate opposition to the Holy Spirit, and consequently a heart dominated and polluted by wilful sin, and a total lack of spiritual understanding, a condition that one would look for in heathens only, characterized them, as it did their ancestors before them (51). Hence, as the fathers in former days persecuted and slew the messengers of the Lord, so now their descendants have even had the Messiah put to death as a criminal and are persecuting His servants (52). And thereby the Jewish people have shown most clearly that *they* are the transgressors of the Law; for this very Law was to lead them to Christ, and even prophesied concerning Him, not only by its many typical ordinances, but also in express words. (Comp. 37.) Hence, they ought surely to be the last persons to charge a faithful servant of Christ with contempt of the Law (53).

**Ver. 1. These things.** (Comp. vi. 11 sqq.) The very form of the question in the original implies a lurking and hostile spirit, not at all proper for a judge, who ought to be fair and impartial even to the greatest criminal.—

**Ver. 2. Brethren.** All those present. (Comp. ii. 29.)

**Fathers.** The members of the Council. (Comp. xxii. 1.)

**Hearken.** To something important. They were not

inclined to listen in the proper spirit to anything he would have to say ; so he asks them in the most friendly way to give attention to his reply. **The God of glory.** Who reveals His majesty not simply among his angels (Is. vi. 1 sqq.), but also among men (Ex. xxiv. 16 sq.). Glory, or majesty, is in the most eminent sense the possession and attribute of God ; and we know of it only as He reveals it. All other glory and majesty is only a faint image of God's, even that of the most mighty monarchs and conquerors ; and they owe it to Him as His representatives or instruments. (Compare also 1 Cor. ii. 8 ; James ii. 1.) **Before he dwelt in Haran.** Hence the removal from Ur of the Chaldees was already the work of God (comp. Gen. xv. 7 ; Neh. ix. 7), and God appeared to Abraham twice calling him out of his idolatrous surroundings (Josh. xxiv. 2, 14 ; comp. Gen. xxxi. 30, 34 ; xxxv. 2-4, where we are told that in the days of Abraham's grandson Jacob idolatry was practised in the former home and by the nearest relatives of the family).—Ver. 3. **Which I shall shew thee.** (Comp. Heb. xi. 8.) Abraham's faith was to be tried and exercised by this indefinite direction. (Comp. Gen. xii. 1.)—Ver. 4. **When his father was dead.** This statement seems to conflict with those found in Genesis ; for according to Gen. xi. 26 Terah would seem to have been 70 years old when Abraham was born to him, and according to Gen. xi. 32 he attained the age of 205 years ; now, since Abraham was 75 years old when he removed to Canaan (Gen. xii. 4), Terah seems to have lived 60 years yet after this removal. Some have tried to obviate this difficulty by assuming that the death of Terah meant here was spiritual, namely, his complete falling away into idolatry and obstinate perseverance in it. It ought, however, to be observed that it is not absolutely necessary to understand

Gen. xi. 26 as saying that Abraham was the oldest son of Terah; he could have been the youngest, born many years after his oldest brother, and be mentioned first solely because he was destined to occupy the most prominent position in the family; and this assumption seems to be favored by the fact that Abraham's son Isaac married, not the daughter, but the grand-daughter, of Nahor, Abraham's brother, which would be entirely natural if Nahor had been Abraham's senior by a good many, perhaps sixty, years (Gen. xxiv. 24). Furthermore, the Samaritan Pentateuch, a recension of the Hebrew text of the books of Moses in use with the Samaritans (40-50 families extant still at Nabulus, the ancient Shechem, with a high priest of their own), gives in Gen. xi. 32, not 205, but 145 years as the age of Terah; and Philo, the celebrated Jewish contemporary of Christ, agrees with the statement of Stephen in saying that Terah died before Abraham's departure.—Ver. 5. **He gave him none inheritance in it.** Comp. Heb. xi. 9.—Ver. 6. Comp. Gen. xv. 13 sq. **Four hundred years.** Here only the round number is given, whilst Ex. xii. 40 the exact number, 430 years, is stated. In Canaan there was no room for a second nation of the size of Israel (Num. i. 45 sq.) to grow up (Gen. xiii. 6 sq.); moreover, the danger of mixing with the idolatrous and licentious natives was very great. (Comp. Gen. xxxviii. 1 sqq.) In Egypt there was room, and no such danger. (Comp. Gen. xlii. 34.)—Ver. 7. **Judge.** Meant of judicial retribution and punishment. **I.** Emphatic; I, the omnipotent Ruler of all nations and the God of Israel. (Comp. Rom. xii. 19.) **And serve me in this place.** In Canaan; an amplification of Gen. xv. 14, and only in form similar to Ex. iii. 12.—Ver. 8. **Covenant of circumcision.** Covenant connected with circumcision, entered into by means



of, and sealed by, circumcision (Gen. xvii. 9 sqq.). God **gave** this covenant, taking the initiative, not on a level with Abraham; moreover, it was mere grace on His side. **And so.** In the covenant with God, as the ancestor and representative of the people of God. Ishmael was born before the covenant had been made (Gen. xvi. 1 sqq.).—Ver. 9. **Moved with jealousy.** Lit. *having become jealous*, or envious.—Ver. 10. **Favour.** Some understand *divine* favor, so that only **wisdom** would be construed with **before Pharaoh**; the divine favor manifested itself especially in giving Joseph wisdom before Pharaoh. But it is more natural and probable that *favor and wisdom before Pharaoh* belong together (comp. Gen. xxxix. 21), though it must be admitted that we should expect the order to be reversed, *wisdom and favor*, the latter being the consequence of the former. Yet, the *favor* of Pharaoh can also be conceived of as making it possible for Joseph to show his *wisdom*, as the ruler of the country. Wisdom *preceded*, and *caused*, the favor, viz. wisdom in interpreting Pharaoh's dreams; and wisdom *followed*, and *justified* and *retained*, the favor, viz. wisdom in governing the country. And the latter wisdom is meant here. But both, favor and wisdom, were a gracious gift of God. **Governor**, etc. Joseph was the Grand Vizier, or Prime Minister, of Pharaoh, his chief servant whom all other servants had to obey, both those in the country and those at the court (Gen. xli. 39 sqq.). **And all his house.** Comp. the Frankish title *Major Domus*, designating a similar dignity.—Ver. 12. **In Egypt.** Lit. *into* Egypt; hence this adverbial phrase belongs grammatically to **he sent forth**, though it has to be supplied after **there was corn** in the form, *in* Egypt. As far as position is concerned, it can be construed either way, and as regards the sense it would have to be supplied in the second clause if

it were not there ; and as it is to be put only once, it is construed with the second clause. " Egypt was the great corn-growing country of the old world. In later times it became the principal granary of Rome. (See Acts xxvii. 6-38.)" (*Pop. Com.*)—Ver. 13. **Was made known.** Lit. *became known again*, was recognized. **Race.** Family, nation. The name **Joseph** is repeated instead of using the pronoun *his* in the second place, indicating his importance and dignity.—Ver. 14. **Three score and fifteen souls.** Lit., *In 75 souls*, viz. consisting in, or of, so many souls. In Gen. xlv. 27, only 70 souls are counted, adding to the 66 mentioned in the preceding verse not only the two sons of Joseph, but also the latter and Jacob himself. Ex. i. 5 and Deut. x. 22 we find the same statement. But in the first two passages the Greek Septuagint translation has 75 instead of 70, having added in Gen. xlv. 20, from Num. xxvi. 29, 35 sq., three grandsons and two great-grandsons of Joseph ; and this translation, much used at the time among the Jews, Stephen here follows.—Ver. 16. **And they were carried over.** Namely, Jacob and our fathers. According to a Jewish tradition, witnessed to also by the Church Father Jerome, not only Joseph was buried at Shechem (Gen. l. 25 sq. ; Josh. xxiv. 32), but also his brothers ; and thus all the sons of Jacob, together with their father, were buried in Canaan, the latter, to be sure, not at Shechem, but at Hebron in the cave of Machpelah (Gen. l. 12 sq.). For the sake of brevity here only that burial-place is mentioned where the majority were buried according to the above-named tradition. Some, however, refer the words, *and they were carried over*, etc., only to *our fathers* ; but then we should expect in the original a pronoun answering to our *these*, or *they*, whilst the subject of *were carried over*, etc., is simply found in the verb. **That Abraham bought.** In

Gen. xxxiii. 19 sq., we are told that Jacob bought this place of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, to erect an altar there; but that does not preclude the statement of our text, as Jacob's grandfather Abraham may previously have bought the same place for the very purpose (comp. Gen. xii. 6 sq.), the Canaanites afterwards unjustly again taking possession of it. (Comp. Gen. xxvi. 15 sqq.) Nor is the recurrence of the same names uncommon, especially in noble families, as ancient and modern history shows.—Ver. 17. **As.** Lit. *in proportion as*: the two facts went together, viz. the drawing nigh of the promise and the growing of the people, and this proportionally. **Vouchsafed.** Conceded, promised, pledged.—Ver. 19. **Dealt subtilly.** Used craft, cunning. **Evil entreated them,** etc. Maltreated them in order to force them to cast out their babes. **To the end they might not live.** Lit., *not be preserved alive*, so as to prevent the increase of the people.—Ver. 20. **Season.** Peculiar time of affliction and oppression. The Greek word used here always denotes *time in its quality*, proper or improper, good or bad (*kairos*). **Exceeding fair.** Lit. *fair unto God*, even in His judgment. (Comp. 2 Cor. x. 4; Gen. x. 9.) The beauty of Moses (comp. Ex. ii. 2; Heb. xi. 23) is also mentioned by the Jewish writers Philo and Josephus; the latter calls him *a boy divine in form*, and a later Jewish writer *fair as an angel*. Comp. Ps. xlv. 2, where Christ, the Prophet like unto Moses (37), is praised in the same way.—Ver. 22. **All the wisdom of the Egyptians.** Embracing mainly natural sciences, including magic, astronomy, medicine, and mathematics, cultivated especially by the priests. This statement concerning the instruction of Moses is taken from tradition, which here, as in other cases, in the main was true and reliable. (Comp. Ex. ii. 1-10.)—Ver. 23. **Wellnigh forty**

**years old.** Lit. *as a time of forty years was being completed for him.* This definite statement is again taken from tradition (comp. Ex. ii. 11), according to which Moses' life is divided into three periods of equal length: forty years at the court of Pharaoh, forty years in Midian, and forty years at the head of the people. **It came into his heart.** It occurred to him. **To visit.** They lived in a different part of the country (Gen. xlvii. 11; comp. xvi. 34). **His brethren.** So he regarded them, notwithstanding their poor and oppressed condition.—Ver. 24. Comp. Ex. ii. 11 sq. **Was oppressed.** Lit. *was being oppressed.*—Ver. 25. **By his hand.** Can here be understood literally; but comp. v. 12. **How that.** That. **Was giving.** Already now, this act being, in his opinion, the beginning of this deliverance.—Ver. 26. Comp. Ex. ii. 13 sq. **He appeared.** All at once, unexpectedly. **Strove.** Fought, quarrelled. **Would have set them at one again.** Lit. *he tried to reconcile them unto peace*, i. e. so that they might be at peace with each other. **Sirs.** Lit. *men.* (Comp. ii. 29.)—Ver. 28. **Wouldest thou,** etc. I hope thou art not determined, etc. **Thou and kill** both are emphatic: *thou* certainly art not the man that has a right to *kill* me.—Ver. 29. Comp. Ex. ii. 15 sqq. **At this saying.** Lit. *in this word*; in it he found the reason for fleeing, since it showed him what he had to expect in case the king should hear of it, namely, no rallying of the people of Israel around him as their leader and deliverer, but rather opposition to his leadership on the part of some and antipathy on the part of the others.—Ver. 30. Comp. Ex. iii. 1 sqq. **When forty years were fulfilled.** Again taken from tradition. (Comp. 23; but also Ex. vii. 7.) **In a flame of fire.** A symbol of His holiness that is a devouring fire for all His enemies, but also a purging and purifying fire

for His own people. (Comp. Deut. ix. 3; Isa. x. 17.) The **bush** that burned with fire but was not consumed (Ex. iii. 2) was a symbol of Israel being cleansed in the oven of oppression (Deut. iv. 20) but not destroyed, since the Lord Himself was in their midst. The **angel** that appeared in the burning bush was the Lord Himself in the form of an angel, as He so often appeared to the patriarchs (e. g. Gen. xxii. 11 sqq.; comp. xlviii. 15 sq.). He is called the Lord (Ex. iii. 4 sqq.), and speaks and acts as God Himself. These revelations of God as the Angel of the Lord are anticipations and promises of the self-manifestation and incarnation of God in Jesus the Christ. The temporary form and appearance of the Old Testament has given way to the eternal reality and essence of the New Testament. What there was the form of an angel, a being above man and hence in a manner foreign to him, is here man himself, the true God-man, Immanuel, God-with-us.—Ver. 32. **Durst not.** Dared not. Sinful man instinctively dreads the presence and immediate revelation of the holy God, conscious of having deserved death (Gen. iii. 8; xvi. 13; Judges xiii. 22).—Ver. 33. **Loose the shoes from thy feet.** “It was, and is still, in the East a mark of reverence to take off the shoes or sandals in the presence of a superior. The manifestation of the Deity made the space round the bush holy ground. In our own time, the Mohammedans always enter their mosques barefoot. It was a maxim among the Pythagoreans, that those conducting sacrifice and worship should be without shoes or sandals on their feet. In the holy places on Mount Gerizim at the present time, the Samaritans minister and worship with bare feet.” (*Pop. Comm.*) Also the priests of the Old Testament wore no shoes or sandals when officiating at the sanctuary (comp. Ex. xxix. 20; Lev. viii. 23). Com-

pare also Josh. v. 15.—Ver. 34. **I have surely seen.** Lit. *having seen I have seen*, or, *seeing I have seen*, or, *seen, yea seen I have*; an imitation of Hebrew emphatic expression, first found in the Septuagint translation (e. g. Ex. iii. 7); though this very same expression occurs in later Greek, and similar emphatic phrases are found in other Greek writers. God sees everything, even when seemingly He pays no attention—a great consolation, and an earnest warning. **Am come down.** Like *have seen*, and *have heard*, an anthropomorphic expression, speaking of God in a human way, this being, in fact, the only way we can speak of Him in a popular manner, intelligible to the plainest understanding. God is said to *come down*, viz. from His throne in heaven, when He begins a certain work or activity on earth, interferes in a matter that so far He had permitted to run its course.—Ver. 35. **This.** Emphatic. (Comp. 36, 37, 38.) He, and nobody else. **Ruler and judge** in olden times as a rule was the same person, as still is the case in despotic government and uncultured nations. God made Moses what **they**, i. e. that evil-doer (27) and those that directly or indirectly sided with him, did not want him to be, a *ruler and judge*; but more than that, also the *deliverer* of his people, and in so far a type of Christ, the Deliverer in the most eminent and perfect sense. **With the hand of the angel.** Being in connection and union with the protective power and guidance of that uncreated angel, with God Himself in His gracious manifestation. (Comp. 30.)—Ver. 36. **Wonders and signs.** Comp. ii. 19.—Ver. 37. Comp. iii. 22. Moses hence was a type, a personal prophecy, of Christ, the greatest of prophets.—Ver. 38. **Church.** Congregation of the people of Israel; when the people were assembled in the wilderness for the purpose of having the Law promulgated to them, Moses **was**.

with the angel, communed, conversed, had intercourse with Him (Ex. xix. 1 sqq.; comp. Num. xii. 6-8); and at the same time he **was**, communed and conversed, with our fathers, hence mediated between God and them. **The angel** is again God Himself in His gracious manifestation. (Comp. 30.) **Living oracles.** Divine utterances or commandments, viz. the Law, that in themselves are good and the way to please God and have life spiritual and eternal, but in consequence of man's utter depravation after and through the fall can be a means of life only by manifesting to him his spiritual death and the impending danger of eternal death, and thus as a tutor lead him to Christ (comp. Rom. vii. 10 sqq.; Gal. iii. 24).—Ver. 39. Comp. Ex. xxxii. 1 sqq. **Thrust him from them.** Virtually, by acting as they did, no more obeying him and the divine Law given through him. **Unto Egypt.** Unto what they had seen and, no doubt, at least to some extent, imitated in Egypt, idolatry especially, as explained by the next verse.—Ver. 40. **Gods.** The plural of category, simply stating the class to which reference is had, without regard to number. (Comp. Matt. ii. 19 sq.) **Wot.** Know. **What is become of him.** He having been away now for forty days (Ex. xxiv. 18).—Ver. 41. **A calf.** In imitation of the idolized Egyptian steer Apis. **Idol.** Such it was, though, as Ex. xxxii. 4 sq. shows, it was merely meant to be a symbol and visible representation of the true God, the Lord, who had brought Israel out of Egypt. For it is idolatry not only to worship and deify another being than the true God, but also to worship the true God in a way different from that which He has commanded. The golden calves that Jeroboam set at Bethel and Dan (1 Kings xii. 28 sq.) were also designed to be nothing else than a representation of the true God whom Judah worshipped in the

temple at Jerusalem. True, genuine worship requires that we recognize and have the true God, and that we worship Him in the way prescribed by Himself; where either is wanting, true worship is wanting. That is also the meaning of the addition to the first commandment (Ex. xx. 4; Deut. v. 8); and hence this is simply such an addition, and no commandment by itself. **Works of their hands.** The golden calf and what was connected with it.—Ver. 42. **Turned.** Acted differently from what He had done before, in holy anger punishing them for their wilful resistance to divine guidance. An obstinate, wilful sinner is often punished by being permitted to fall into still more grievous sin. (Comp. Rom. i. 21 sqq.) **Serve the hosts of heaven.** Worship as gods the stars of heaven. **Book of prophets.** Amos v. 25 sqq. **Did ye offer,** etc. The sacrifices offered to the Lord were not worth mentioning in comparison with the idolatry practised, both as regards the number of the sacrifices and the spirit of the people. The interrogative particle introducing this question in Greek presupposes a negative answer. **House of Israel.** Children, descendants of Jacob, who as ancestor of the people of God is called Israel (Gen. xxxii. 28); hence the latter is his honorary name, as also that of his descendants. The *house of Israel* ought to have acted differently.—Ver. 43. **And ye took up.** Instead of acting so that the question in the preceding verse could be answered affirmatively they *took up*, carried in procession from one encampment to the other, **the tabernacle of Moloch**, etc. Stephen here again follows the Septuagint translation, faulty as it seems to be in detail, since it gives in general the sense of the original and proves what here is to be proved. The literal translation of Amos v. 26 seems to be: "*On the contrary, you carried*" (along with you) "*the tabernacle*



*of your king*" (idol), "*and the shrine of your images*," namely, "*the star of your god*" (the star that you made your god). The idolatry of Egypt was originally star worship, especially of the sun; and the figure of such an idolized star, probably the sun, the Israelites carried with them in a shrine or small tabernacle, as usual in Egypt, and worshipped it. (Comp. Ez. xx. 7 sqq.) Some have assumed that *Moloch*, in the Septuagint translation, means the sun as a supposed deity, and *Remphan*, or *Rephan*, means the planet Saturn; whilst others take both expressions as simply different names of Saturn. **Beyond Babylon.** This Stephen, by way of explanation (comp. Isa. xxxix. 6), puts for the original "*beyond Damascus*." What is *beyond Babylon* is also *beyond Damascus*; the former is more definite, hence explanatory.—Ver. 44. **Tabernacle of the testimony.** Where God gives testimony concerning Himself, reveals Himself. This is the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew original which, literally translated, means, *tent of (an appointed) meeting*, where God met His people, revealing Himself as to His will and grace, and receiving their worship, especially sacrifices. **As he appointed**, etc. God Himself. (Comp. Ex. xxv. 9, 40.)—Ver. 45. **In their turn.** Lit. *having received it from their predecessors*, or ancestors. **When they entered on the possession**, etc. Lit. *in taking possession of* (the country of) *the nations*, or gentiles. **Before the face**, etc. So that they needed not to see them any more, to their offence or fear and danger. **Unto the days of David.** Belongs to **brought in**, from which expression is to be supplied the idea *and had*, or used, *it*.—Ver. 46. Comp. 2 Sam. vii. 1 sqq.; Ps. cxxxii. 1 sqq. **Habitation.** The significations of this Greek word are, tent or tabernacle, quarters, dwelling, habitation; here, in contrast to *tent* (the Greek word in verse 44 is of the

same root: *skene*—*skenoma*), the last signification, in the special sense of a firm, immovable dwelling, *house*, must be assumed. **The God of Jacob.** That He was to be worshipped there, the Divine King of Israel, was the motive of David. *Jacob* here, as often in the Old Testament (Gen. xlix. 7; Isa. xiv. 1, etc.), denotes the people, the descendants of Jacob; it is more poetic than the commoner name Israel.—Ver. 47. **But Solomon.** David was a man of war and blood (1 Kings v. 3; 1 Chron. xxii. 7 sqq.; xxviii. 2 sqq.), and hence was not to build the temple, the typical embodiment and visible representation of the kingdom of God which is a kingdom of peace (Rom. xiv. 17). *Solomon* (Hebrew, *Shelomoh*) means, Man, or Prince, of Peace, *Frederick* (German, *Friedrich*, Peaceful Ruler), and in this respect is a type of Christ (comp. Isa. ix. 6), as David is in conquering enemies and affliction and in founding the kingdom.—Ver. 48. **Howbeit.** But, however. **In houses made with hands.** Lit. *in things*, or something, *made with hands*. **Saith the prophet.** Isa. lxvi. 1 sq. Comp. John iv. 20 sqq.—Ver. 49. **My throne.** Lit. *throne for me*. The whole universe, or, in Biblical language, heaven and earth (comp. Gen. i. 1), God fills with His omnipresent power and rule. **What manner of house,** etc. No house can be built, no place can be selected, that will enclose and confine God and His power and grace. **Rest.** Abode, quiet majestic rule.—Ver. 50. The Creator of the universe cannot stand in need of any house that His creatures can erect for Him. We must never suppose, as the Jews did, that when God makes any local or temporary arrangements for the sake of men, their welfare, education, etc., He does so because He must, and that He is bound to this and binds His people to it for all time; nor must we suppose that, because the latter is not the case, men may

with impunity neglect such arrangements as long as in the will of God they are to last.—Ver. 51. **Stiffnecked.** Not willing to bow their necks, themselves, to the will of God,—obstinate, stubborn, headstrong; a figure taken from oxen. **Uncircumcised.** Circumcised only externally, in their bodies; which external, bodily circumcision, indeed, was the will and commandment of God (Gen. xvii. 9 sqq.), but it was to be the means and seal, the symbol and expression of the internal circumcision, the cleansing of the heart, and without this was of no real, lasting benefit. **Heart and ears.** These were in their natural, unregenerate condition, averse to hearing and obeying the word of God. The *heart* is mentioned first, because it is the source and cause of what the *ears*, and the other members, do or omit to do. The *heart* here also refers to will and affections, the *ears* to understanding. **Ye do,** etc. *Ye* is emphatic; you are the very people, little as it should be expected of the people of the covenant. **Always.** Also now. **The Holy Ghost.** Not mere men, or an evil spirit that would lead you astray, but God Himself who is intent upon your salvation. **As your fathers did,** etc. You are the true children of your obstinately disobedient ancestors, also spiritually.—Ver. 52. **Which of the prophets,** etc. Proof of the preceding clause. There was scarcely one of the prophets whom your fathers did not treat in this rebellious way. **The Righteous One.** In the highest sense (comp. iii. 14); He, certainly, did not merit the treatment He received, having come to obtain righteousness and salvation for all sinners. That His **coming** had been **shewed before,** announced beforehand, prophesied, increased the guilt of those that maltreated Him instead of gratefully and joyously receiving Him. **Of whom ye have now,** etc. Comp. iii. 13 sqq.—Ver. 53. **As it was**

**ordained by angels.** Lit. *in accordance with, or, in consequence of, ordinances or arrangements of angels*; angels, as the accompanying servants of God, made the arrangements for the promulgation of the Law (comp. Gal. iii. 19; Heb. ii. 2). This also shows the supernatural, divine, character of the Law; and, being thus authenticated, it obligates the more. The holy record of the giving of the Law in Ex. xix. does not expressly mention the presence of angels; yet it seems to be indicated by *the voice of the trumpet* in verse 16. And Deut. xxxiii. 2 *the ten thousands of holy ones* are doubtless angels. In consequence Jewish tradition has always ascribed to the angels an important part in the giving of the Law, making them the assistants and instruments of God; and the New Testament in the present passage and the others cited above sanctions this tradition as trustworthy.

#### (B.) THE STONING OF STEPHEN.

54-60. Now when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. But they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city, and stoned him; and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *the Lord*, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

The solemn and severe charges of Stephen, instead of bringing the leaders of the Jews to their senses, only roused their anger to such a degree that they even gnashed their teeth at him (54). He, however, was only the more filled with the gifts of the Holy Ghost

(comp. iv. 8), so that, without any fear of his mortal enemies, he could direct his whole attention to heaven in prayer, where he beheld God Himself in His majesty, and Jesus, whom he had so faithfully confessed, ready to receive him into His kingdom of glory (55). And of what thus to his happiness he beheld in the spirit, his mouth could not but speak, and so again bear witness to the divine majesty of his exalted Redeemer (56). But his enemies became so infuriated by these, as they in their wilful blindness imagined, blasphemous statements, that in a most tumultuous way they took the law into their own hands and murdered him, trying at the same time to keep up the appearance of legality (57 sq.). Stephen, however, in the continued torments of this stoning, commended his soul into the hands of his divine Master (59), and, as a true disciple of His, uttered his last fervent prayer for the eternal welfare of his murderers (60).

Ver. 54. **Were cut to the heart.** Comp. v. 33. **Gnashed with their teeth.** In fury and malice.—Ver. 55. **Jesus standing.** Not *sitting* (Matt. xxvi. 64; Mark xvi. 19), but ready to deliver His faithful disciple from his murderers. **Standing** denotes His love and eagerness; **on the right hand of God**, His omnipotence, or His possession and use of divine power also as man. **Into heaven**, or, perhaps better, *towards heaven*, a person can look even when in a room (comp. John xvii. 1); what Stephen saw, he saw in the spirit, and no one else saw it.—Ver. 56. **Behold.** As always, indicating and ushering in something important or unexpected. **I see.** With admiration, amazement, and joy. **Opened.** Perfectly, so that I see clearly. **The Son of man.** In an eminent sense, the Son of man who has no equal, “the woman’s seed” (Gen. iii. 15) that was to bruise the serpent’s head, promised and expected ever since the fall

as the Saviour of mankind ; who calls Himself the Son of *man* because unspeakable love for fallen man prompted Him to become such, being also, and prior to this, the essential, eternal Son of God. (Comp. also Dan. vii. 13 sq.) This is the name of Christ that only He Himself uses ; it occurs in the Gospels 78 times, or, not counting the parallel passages, 50 times. (Comp. Matt. viii. 20.) Stephen here uses that name in evident allusion to a word of Christ like Matt. xxvi. 64, hence almost as a citation. The Son of *man*, our brother, on the right hand of *God*—what a comfort !—Ver. 57. **Cried out with a loud voice.** In rage and fury. **Stopped their ears.** Unwilling to hear more of such blasphemy. **Rushed upon him with one accord.** The leaders of the people, and the whole people infuriated by their leaders. (Comp. Matt. xxvii. 20 sqq.)—Ver. 58. **Stoned him.** In Jewish fashion, stoning being the favorite mode of capital punishment ; but here it was in violation of the decrees of their present government, they not having any more the right of inflicting capital punishment (John xviii. 31). Still they also here, true to their hypocritical nature (comp. John xviii. 28 ; xix. 31), tried to observe some external features of their law, stoning Stephen outside of the city (Lev. xxiv. 14 sqq.), and having the witnesses against him (vi. 13) to begin the execution and thus prove their sincerity and certainty (Deut. xvii. 6 sq.). In this case the latter could discharge their, here impiously arrogated, duty so much the more easily because of the willing services of Saul, a still young, but fanatically zealous disciple of the Pharisees. (Comp. xxii. 20.)—Ver. 59. **And they stoned Stephen.** A tragical repetition of a clause of the preceding verse, rendered the more tragic still by the succeeding words, **calling**, etc., i. e. who called upon the Lord ; such a man they stoned. **Lord Jesus.**

Whom he had seen standing on the right hand of God, ready and able to receive him, i. e. his soul or spirit, until at the day of resurrection soul and body would be reunited for eternal happiness. What Jesus not so very long ago, in extreme humiliation, had asked His heavenly Father to do as to His spirit (Luke xxiii. 46), He now, in His state of divine exaltation, was most fitly called upon Himself to do with regard to the spirit of His faithful disciple.—Ver. 60. **Kneeled down.** In humble consciousness of his infinite subordination to Christ, to whom in his sufferings and death he bore so much resemblance. **Cried with a loud voice.** A fervent petition, born of a fervent love. **Lay not to their charge.** Lit. *do not establish*, retain, impute; the opposite of forgiving. (Comp. Luke xxiii. 34.) **He fell asleep.** Christ's death is never called a sleep, because it was a punishment for our sins; but by it He obtained for us that our death can be a sleep, and will be such if we in faith accept the redemption and salvation acquired by His death. Likewise, Christ by His anguish in the face of death (Matt. xxvi. 36 sqq.; xxvii. 46), paying for our sins the penalty even of hell and its terrors, has made it possible that His disciples, like Stephen, can look with joy and happiness into the face of death itself, because it now is for them the deliverance from the last vestiges of sin and the entrance to perfect righteousness and happiness.—Ch. viii. 1. **Saul was consenting**, etc. Was pleased with it, approved of it; that was the state and condition of his mind.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### (A.) THE GOSPEL IN SAMARIA.

1-25. And Saul was consenting unto his death.

And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men buried Stephen, and made great lamentation over him. But Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word. And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ. And the multitudes gave heed with one accord unto the things that were spoken by Philip, when they heard, and saw the signs which he did. For *from* many of those which had unclean spirits, they came out, crying with a loud voice: and many that were palsied, and that were lame, were healed. And there was much joy in that city.

But there was a certain man, Simon by name, which beforetime in the city used sorcery, and amazed the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is that power of God which is called Great. And they gave heed to him, because that of long time he had amazed them with his sorceries. But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. And Simon also himself believed: and being baptized, he continued with Philip; and beholding signs and great miracles wrought, he was amazed.

Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. Now when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever



I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right before God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee. For I see that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. And Simon answered and said, Pray ye for me to the Lord, that none of the things which ye have spoken come upon me.

They therefore, when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.

The murder of Stephen was immediately followed by a violent persecution of all the Christians in Jerusalem. But in the providence of God this had to accelerate the spreading of the Gospel in the country surrounding that city, and even to bring it the sooner to Samaria; for, with the exception of the apostles, who held it to be their duty to stay at what was then the centre of the Church, every one that could avoided persecution by flight (1). Nevertheless Stephen did not lack an honorable burial (2). Saul, however, the complacent witness of Stephen's stoning, was one of the most passionate persecutors of the Christians (3). As a matter of course, the dispersed Christians did not keep silent concerning their faith, but spread the Gospel wherever they went (4). So Philip, one of the seven assistants (vi. 5), came with the Gospel of Jesus the Christ to the principal city of the Samaritans (5), and with his preaching and miraculous deeds found willing hearers (6), manifestly casting out many unclean spirits and also healing many natural diseases and ailments (7), to the great joy of the people (8). In the same city there had been for some time a certain Simon, who, with his real or pretended magical powers and his claim of being an extraordinary man, had so astonished the people of the country (9) that he was generally revered as the incarnation of an especially great

power of God (10); and this the more, since he had already for a long time carried on his imposition there (11). Nevertheless the preaching of Philip found acceptance and belief, so that persons of both sexes were by baptism made members of the kingdom of God (12). Upon Simon also the undeniable miraculous deeds of Philip made such an impression that he could not but concede his divine mission, and hence, convinced in his intellect though not regenerated in heart, was baptized and became a constant companion of Philip (13). When the apostles at Jerusalem heard of this, the first founding of the Church in a heathen, or half-heathen, country, they regarded it their duty, as the leaders of the primitive Church, to send two of their number to investigate and, if possible and advisable, to sanction and strengthen this new and important movement (14); and these, after a satisfactory examination, communicated to the new Christians the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, and thus sanctioned the work of Philip as pleasing to their Lord (15-17). And now Simon revealed his unchanged heart, offering money to the apostles for the power of conferring, as they did, such wonderful gifts (18 sq.). But Peter with just and holy severity rebuked this ungodly, selfish spirit, showing itself here for the first time, in a similar way as he had rebuked the hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira, telling him that such conduct deserved nothing but eternal perdition (20), since it revealed an insincere heart that is in fundamental opposition to the Gospel, and hence is necessarily excluded from the divine gifts and blessings that it offers and confers (21). He, therefore, admonishes him to permit himself to be delivered from his wickedness by true repentance, and to pray the Lord to pardon his impious design (22); though the apostle has no great hopes in this

respect, the bitter enmity towards the Gospel in its true sense and the total subjection to sin, as manifested in Simon's conduct, making true repentance and conversion a matter of grave doubt (23). Peter's doubt was also 'justified' by the reply of Simon: he wants the apostles, as special servants and favorites of God, to pray for him, but not that he may become another and a better man, but that the punishment threatened may not befall him (24). After the two apostles had fulfilled their mission, strengthening the new Christians in their faith, they returned to Jerusalem, also on their way home preaching the Gospel wherever an opportunity offered (25).

Ver. 1. **On that day.** The stoning of Stephen set the example and became the signal. **They were all scattered.** In accordance with the commandment of Christ (Matt. x. 23). **All.** Of course, must not be strained; this was a *general* dispersion.—Ver. 2. **Devout men.** Pious men who, like formerly Joseph of Arimathæa and Nicodemus (John xix. 38 sq.), were favorably disposed towards the Gospel, but had not as yet had the courage to embrace it openly, now, however, showed their sympathy, without any fear of the hostile Jews. **Great lamentation.** Expressive of the sense of the loss sustained by the death of this great and holy man.—Ver. 3. **Laid waste.** Ravaged, devastated, ruined, as much as lay in him; he tried it and was occupied with it (Imperfect of the Greek verb). **Haling.** Dragging (the same root as *haul* and the German *holen*). **Men and women.** Not even sparing the weaker sex. **Committed them to prison.** Most probably as a commissioner of the Council, treating the Christians as manifest transgressors of the Law. (Comp. ix. 1 sq.) The **houses** which Saul entered, according to the general mode of expression used here, no doubt were the *dwelling-places* of the Christians, and not, as some suppose, the

meeting-houses where they came together for worship. (Comp. Rom. xvi. 5.)—Ver. 4. **Preaching the word.** Comp. 2 Cor. iv. 13; Matt. xii. 34. **Went about.** Through the countries whither they had fled.—Ver. 5. **Philip.** Distinguished from the apostles who stayed at Jerusalem (1), and evidently inferior to them (14 sqq.); hence not the apostle of that name (Matt. x. 3; John i. 43), but a colleague of Stephen. (Comp. vi. 4 sq.; xxi. 8.) **The city of Samaria.** The main city or capital, at that time Samaria or Sebaste, the former being the Greek form of the original Hebrew name (*Shomeron*), the latter the name given it by Herod, who rebuilt it, in honor of Augustus the emperor (*Sebaste* the Greek for the Latin *Augusta*). **The Christ.** The advent and appearance of the Messiah, whom also the Samaritans expected (comp. John iv. 25), in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.—Ver. 6. **Signs.** Comp. ii. 19. **Which he did.** Repeatedly, continually. (Comp. 3.) **When they heard.** What is the grammatical object? **The things that were spoken by Philip?** Or, **the signs which he did?** The former seems the more probable, though the first impression is that the latter is the case. Hearing the wonderful tidings announced by Philip and seeing his wonderful deeds caused them to pay attention to the contents of his preaching. If, however, the *hearing* also refers to the *signs*, the sense must be, either, that those that heard of the signs, as witnessed by others, also came to see them themselves; or, that simply hearing of them had the same effect as seeing them, viz. causing people to give heed to the Gospel preached by Philip, whether heard directly or indirectly. The visit of Christ in that region (John iv.), no doubt, was still remembered and had something to do with the success that crowned the work of Philip. (Comp. John iv. 39 sqq.)—Ver. 7. **From many,**

etc. The sentence is anacoluthic; it begins as if it were to read, *many of those which had unclean spirits were healed*: but the introduction of the mode of healing, that the spirits *came out crying with a loud voice*, changes the construction. The marginal translation of the Revised Version is grammatically correct, in fact, the only one possible if we do not assume an anacoluthon, viz. *Many of those which had unclean spirits that cried with a loud voice came forth*, namely, to be healed; but then it would almost seem as if these, in contrast with those mentioned in the next clause, had not been healed. The sense, in our opinion, must be that given in the text of the R. V. **Unclean spirits.** Comp. v. 16. **Crying with a loud voice.** A proof that they were there and had to leave. **Palsied.** "Paralytic, i. e. suffering from the relaxing of the nerves on one side; univ. *disabled, weak of limb*" (GRIMM-THAYER). (Comp. Matt. iv. 24.)—Ver. 9. **Simon.** Surnamed *the Magician*, or *Magus*, according to Justin Martyr, himself a Samaritan by birth, a native of Gitthon, a town of Samaria. **Beforetime in the city.** Is best construed with **there was**; already before Philip came to the city, he had been there, *using sorcery*. (Comp. Matt. ii. 1; Acts. xiii. 6 sqq.; xix. 19.) **Giving out.** Lit. *saying*. **That himself was some great one.** *Himself*, not Christ, he preached: the opposite of Philip (5). **Some great one.** Perhaps intentionally indefinite, so as to leave room for popular fancy and exaggeration.—Ver. 10. **Gave heed.** Just as in the case of Philip (6). **From the least to the greatest.** Comp. xxvi. 22. **Is that power of God.** Something analogous to the incarnation of the Word (John i. 14), as he is said to have claimed that he was the incarnation of the Father for the Samaritans, of the Son for the Jews, and of the Holy Ghost for the Gentiles. Such a person "was not an un-

common figure in the history of this period. Such a one we meet with again in Elymas at the court of the Roman governor, Sergius Paulus (Acts xiii.). Such a one was the famous impostor Apollonius of Tyana, who flourished in the same century. An advanced knowledge of natural philosophy, especially of chemistry, gave these clever unscrupulous characters a strange power and influence over men's minds, an influence they constantly used to further their own selfish ends." (*Pop. Com.*) And we surely would not be justified in denying the possibility of Satanic influence and power in such men. (Comp. Matt. xxiv. 24; 2 Thess. ii. 9.)—Ver. 12. **Kingdom of God.** Comp. i. 3. **The name of Jesus Christ.** The revelation of Jesus as the promised Messiah. (Comp. ii. 38.) **Both men and women.** Lit. *not only men, but also women.* (Comp. Gal. iii. 28.)—Ver. 13. **Beholding.** Attentively, with interest. **Signs and great miracles, or powers, or mighty works.** Comp. ii. 22. **Wrought.** Lit. *coming into existence*, occurring; they did not simply look so, as he from his own long experience was well able to judge; he had to concede the superiority of Philip to himself, and could not help being **amazed**.—Ver. 14. **Samaria.** Where at first they had been commanded by Christ not to preach (Matt. x. 5), but whither after the ascension of Christ the Gospel was also to be brought (Matt. xxviii. 19). Here, as in verse 5, the *country* is meant, having followed the example of its capital. **Had received.** And still had (Perfect of Greek verb). **Peter and John.** *Two* were sent, in accordance with Christ's arrangement (Mark vi. 7), as also according to an Old Testament rule (Deut. xvii. 6) sanctioned by Christ for the New Testament (Matt. xviii. 16); and the two foremost were selected (comp. John i. 35 sqq.; Acts i. 13; iii. 1) for this important office, Peter again being the first.

Ver. 15. **The Holy Ghost.** Comp. ii. 4 sqq.—Ver. 16. **Only they had been baptized,** etc., viz. by Philip, who evidently had not the power of communicating the *miraculous* gifts of the Holy Ghost. The apostles, and all of them, since no distinction is made here between Peter and John, occupied an exceptional position in the primitive Church. The *ordinary*, really saving, gifts of the Holy Ghost were bestowed by baptism. **Into the name of the Lord Jesus.** Comp. ii. 38. In this latter passage it is, *in* the name; here it is, *into* the name, denoting the *relation* and *communion* into which a person is brought by baptism, if rightly administered and received, namely, into that of Jesus the Christ, the Redeemer of mankind and therefore the divine King of His Church, the communion of true believers. (Comp. Matt. xxviii. 19.) It is not necessary to suppose that the *formula* of baptism is given here; it is rather the object or end, the blessing and benefit, the result and consequence, or also the nature and character, of baptism.—Ver. 18. **When Simon saw.** Lit. *when he had seen*: the *effects* of the communication of the Holy Ghost, speaking with tongues and the like (comp. ii. 4; x. 44 sqq.), proved and manifested the communication. Simon himself does not seem to have received these miraculous gifts; he did not *feel* in himself, but simply *saw* in others, what by the symbolical gesture of laying-on of hands (comp. vi. 6) was really conferred; in his eagerness to obtain more, perhaps, he did not even wait for his turn.—Ver. 19. **Me also.** As you have it. Of course, he merely wanted it because he thought it would give him still greater power and influence with the people. This selfish, impious request of Simon, to have spiritual power given him for money, is the origin of the term *simony*, of so frequent use especially in the Middle Ages, denoting the sale or

purchase of ecclesiastical offices and positions.—Ver. 20. **Peter.** Comp. ver. 14. **Thy silver.** In holy emotion spoken of as capable of perdition. Solemn warning and earnest reproof here takes the *form* of a wish; Peter, of course, does not really wish the damnation of Simon, but rather his conversion, as verse 22 shows. **The gift of God.** Cannot be bought with money, or it would no more be a *gift*, a gracious present, wholly unmerited.—Ver. 21. **Neither part nor lot.** No part whatever, an emphatic conjunction of two synonyms, the second expressing the same idea as the first, but figuratively. **Matter.** That which here is spoken of, viz. the communication of miraculous gifts; he has them neither himself, nor, and much less, can he communicate them to others. But perhaps it is preferable to understand the Greek word (*logos*) here in the same sense in which it is used in this whole chapter (i. e. vers. 4, 14), viz. the *word* of God, the Gospel; having, because of his lack of repentance and faith, no part in it and its blessed contents and gifts, he could not expect to receive the power desired, nor anything but perdition. **Right.** Straightforward, upright, sincere; he was a hypocrite, claiming to be a Christian whilst he was not.—Ver. 22. **Of thy wickedness.** Lit. *away from*, etc., turning away from it and being delivered from it by the grace and power of God.—Ver. 23. **For.** Repentance is necessary and doubtful at the same time, because of the manifest condition of his heart. **Gall of bitterness.** The *gall* meant here is *bitterness* in the moral sense, bitter enmity; the genitive is that of apposition or explanation. **Bond of iniquity.** To be understood in a similar way, viz. what binds and fetters him and leads him as a slave is his iniquity and godlessness.—Ver. 24. **Ye.** Emphatic. If tradition in this case can be relied upon, the fears of Peter with regard to



Simon were also fully justified by the subsequent history of the man, he falling deeper and deeper and finally becoming the founder of one of the first and worst Gnostic sects.—Ver. 25. **Testified.** Earnestly and solemnly witnessed to the truth of the Gospel as already preached by Philip. **The word of the Lord.** Given and enjoined by Him, treating of Him and His work of grace and redemption; He is the author and the contents at the same time.

### (B.) THE CONVERSION OF THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH.

26-40. But an angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza: the same is desert. And he arose and went: and behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, who had come to Jerusalem for to worship; and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some one shall guide me? And he besought Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the place of the scripture which he was reading was this,

He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;  
And as a lamb before his shearer is dumb,  
So he openeth not his mouth:  
In his humiliation his judgment was taken away:  
His generation who shall declare?  
For his life is taken from the earth.

And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other? And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip

was found at Azotus : and passing through he preached the gospel to all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea.

Philip would seem to have been already on his way back from Samaria to Judæa (comp. 5 sqq.) when he received the command from God to go upon the road that led from Jerusalem to Gaza (26). Obeying this command Philip found an Ethiopian noble reading the prophecies of Isaiah (27 sq.). The Holy Ghost, having by His prevenient grace prepared the heart of that nobleman for the reception of the Gospel, now bade Philip keep close to his vehicle (29). Upon doing this Philip heard him reading, and asked him whether he had the right understanding of what he was reading (30). And he had to confess, not only that this was not the case, but also that it was not at all likely that he could understand it without the guidance of a man better versed in the Scriptures than he was ; and as he regarded Philip as probably being such a man, he asked the latter to ride with him (31). The section of Isaiah that he was reading forms a part of the celebrated chapter liii., that Old Testament Gospel in an eminent sense, which speaks of the Servant of God (comp. iii. 13) as patiently suffering and dying in the place of sinners, but just thereby ending His state of humiliation and completing His voluntary and vicarious subjection to the Law and its penalties, and as having innumerable believing adherents in consequence of His elevation from earthly humiliation to heavenly glory and majesty (32 sq.). As Philip had immediately acceded to the request of the eunuch to sit with him, the latter had the more courage and confidence to ask him for an explanation of that remarkable passage, especially with regard to the person of the Servant of God (34) ; and in a solemn discourse Philip set forth the fulfilment of that prophecy, as of all the prophetical

promises, in the appearance of Jesus the Christ, the Saviour of mankind (35). This had such an effect upon the eunuch that at the first opportunity offered he expressed the desire to join the number of Christ's disciples by baptism (36); and as he openly confessed his faith in Jesus, the God-man, Philip joyously complied with his request (37 sq.). This ending the duties of Philip in this matter, he was no more to accompany the eunuch; but as a testimony of his being in reality a messenger of the true God he was taken away in a supernatural manner. And as the eunuch looked upon this miraculous occurrence in its proper light, his faith was not weakened but rather strengthened by it, and he could continue his journey rejoicing in his Saviour, without any anxious delay or sad misgivings as to Philip's, or his own, future (39). Philip, however, was first seen again at Ashdod, whence he travelled northward, everywhere preaching the Gospel (40).

Ver. 26. **Arise.** Does not necessarily indicate that Philip saw the angel in a dream (ii. 17), but rather that he was to prepare himself for doing something. (Comp. v. 17.) **Toward the south.** The road ran, of course, in a southwesterly direction. **Down.** Gaza was situated in the maritime plain inhabited in former times by the Philistines, being the southernmost and most important of the five main cities of Philistia. (Comp. Gen. x. 19; Josh. xiii. 3.) Destroyed later in the Jewish war that ended with the destruction of Jerusalem, about A. D. 66, it was afterwards rebuilt and is still an important place. Its Hebrew name means "the strong one." **The same is desert.** Viz. the road, leading through an uninhabited country. Thus the road was designated because there were, and are, other roads that lead from Jerusalem to Gaza. Such a road there still is;

and on it the man Philip was to meet could easily be found.—Ver. 27. **Behold.** Something unexpected. **Ethiopia.** Probably here the then still independent state of Meroe, with the capital Napata, south of Egypt and north of Abyssinia, on the Nile, the present Nubia. **Eunuch.** No doubt in this case a proselyte; though, because of his bodily mutilation implied by the name, he could not be a *proselyte of righteousness*, i. e. a convert to Judaism that was circumcised and in all respects a member of the holy people, observing all the righteousness required of such a member by the Law (comp. Deut. xxiii. 1); but only a *proselyte of the gate*, i. e. properly, a stranger that lived within the gates of a Jewish city without being a member of the people, observing merely the so-called seven *Noachian commandments*, called so because they were claimed to have been given already to Noah (comp. Gen. ix. 4-6), viz. to refrain from idolatry, blasphemy, disobedience to the magistrates, murder, fornication or incest, robbery or theft, and eating blood. Later tradition calls this eunuch Indich, or Judich. **Of great authority.** Lit. *a courtier, high officer*; what office he held is stated afterwards: **who was over all her treasure**: he was the queen's chief treasurer. **Candace.** Like *Pharaoh* in olden and *Czar* and *Sultan* in modern times a title of the female rulers of Napata, and not a proper name. Tradition states that she was converted and baptized by the eunuch who also preached the Gospel to her subjects. **Who had come to Jerusalem for to worship.** As a proselyte of the gate.—Ver. 28. **Was reading.** Or, *was having read to him*, since Philip *heard* the reading (30). The journey on those ancient roads was necessarily slow (comp. Matt. iii. 3); thus reading was possible even when travelling. **The prophet Isaiah.** Probably in the Septuagint Greek translation which was extensively used in Egypt, where it also

had its origin. What the eunuch at Jerusalem had heard concerning Jesus and His followers may have moved him to read just Isaiah, the Evangelist of the Old Testament, and his prophecies about the Servant of God.—Ver. 29. **The spirit said unto Philip.** Internally.—Ver. 30. **Heard.** Comp. verse 28. **Understandest thou.** The interrogative particle introducing this question in the original Greek generally, though not always, presupposes a *negative* answer. Philip evidently, and rightly, doubts the understanding.—Ver. 31. **How can I.** Lit. *for how should I*; this *for* presupposes the answer *No* to the question of Philip, and the form of the original "is used to express what would happen on the fulfilment of some supposed condition" (BURTON), viz. of the condition expressed in the next clause, **Except some one shall guide me.** **Guide.** Show the way, lead.—Ver. 32. **Place.** Passage, section; some give it, *contents*. (Comp. Isa. liii. 7 sq.)—Ver. 33. **In his humiliation his judgment was taken away.** When He thus voluntarily humbled Himself, bearing the sin of others, the sufferings that God as Judge had laid upon Him as the representative and substitute of sinful man came to an end, that being the climax and turning-point. (Comp. Phil. ii. 8 sq.) **His generation.** Those that belong to Him as their spiritual head and ancestor. **Who shall declare.** Who will be able to enumerate them, their number being beyond computation.—Ver. 34. **Answered.** Comp. v. 8. **Of whom.** This he recognized as the main point. Christ's *person* is all-important, the foundation of all His work, the sum and substance of all His teaching, since His doctrine is not primarily, much less only, a system of moral precepts which could be followed without any knowledge or certainty regarding its author. No man can be a Christian unless he knows who Christ is according to His own revelation as con-

tained in the Bible, and recognizes and worships Him as such.—Ver. 35. **Opened his mouth.** Solemnly, as the bearer of a grand message. (Comp. Matt. v. 2; Acts x. 34.) **Preached.** Told him the glad tidings of Jesus the Christ, the Gospel of a Saviour.—Ver. 36. **On the way.** Lit., *along the way*. **A certain water.** Some water. **What doth hinder me.** What is in the way, can prevent me, seeing that I desire it. Hence, Philip had given him instruction also concerning baptism.—Ver. 37 is omitted in the best manuscripts; what it states, however, is simply a matter of course. Probably some copyist or interpreter first put it on the margin as an exegetical complement, and another one, thinking it to be a part of the text itself, put it in. The insertion can be explained in this, very natural, way, whilst no good reason could be given for the omission from the text if it had formed a part of it.—Ver. 38. **Into the water.** A baptism by immersion, as doubtless was the rule in those times and climes. (Comp. ii. 41.) The practice of the apostles and their assistants, as far as we can make out, as well as that of the ancient Church after them, shows that the *mode* of applying the water in baptism, and the *quantity* used, is immaterial; hence, there is no essential difference between immersion and sprinkling, the latter being simply a modification of the former, rendered necessary or desirable by existing circumstances, e. g. condition of health or clime, number, locality, etc.—Ver. 39. **Caught away.** Seized and carried off speedily and miraculously; not merely moved and induced him to hurry away. (Comp. 1 Kings xviii. 12; 2 Kings ii. 16; Ez. iii. 14;—2 Cor. xii. 2, 4; 1 Thess. iv. 17.) **The Spirit of the Lord** did this because Philip as a preacher of the Gospel was in His service, and was now to work somewhere else. **For he went,** etc. He did not consume any time in looking for him and trying to meet

him again, knowing that God's purpose in bringing them together was accomplished.—Ver. 40. **At Azotus.** Lit. *into*, etc.; *thither* he had been carried, and there he was found, was met again by men. *Azotus* is the Greek form for the Hebrew *Ashdod*, an old city of the Philistines (Josh. xiii. 3; 1 Sam. v. 1), about 35 miles north of Gaza, west of Jerusalem, now a miserable Mohammedan village. (Comp. Amos i. 8.) **Passing through.** Viz. the country there. **Cæsarea.** This city became Philip's home; about twenty years afterwards we find him living here (xxi. 8). It was, perhaps, during all that time the centre of his evangelistic activity. "Cæsarea was distant about 70 miles from Jerusalem, and was situated on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Before the days of the great Herod it was merely a station for vessels. Herod, however, designed to make it the commercial capital of Palestine; he adorned it with marble palaces, provided it with a magnificent harbor, larger than the Piræus at Athens, and with a vast quay. In the midst of the new city rose, on an eminence, the Temple of Cæsar, with statues of the Emperor and of Rome. With slavish adulation King Herod named the city after his powerful patron Augustus, *Cæsarea*, under whose mighty protection for the present and the far future he placed the new capital of the old Land of Promise. After Herod's death Cæsarea became the residence of the Roman governors of the country. Here the well-known Procurators Pontius Pilate, Felix, and Festus held their 'courts.' Here Paul was subsequently tried before that brilliant assembly, presided over by the Roman governor, and King Agrippa, and the infamous princess Bernice. At the commencement of the Jewish war we read of 20,000 Jews resident in Cæsarea being massacred. Vespasian was saluted emperor first in this place. In grateful memory, prob-

ably, of this circumstance, he raised it to the dignity of a colony; but its prosperity seems gradually to have decayed. We hear of it now and again in the days of the Crusaders, but it has been for several centuries a mere heap of ruins. A few fishers' huts now occupy the site of this once proud capital." (*Pop. Com.*).





## CHAPTER IX.

### (A.) THE CONVERSION OF SAUL (A. D. 34).

1-30. But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and asked of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus: and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven: and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he *said*, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: but rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but beholding no man. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing; and they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink.

Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and the Lord said unto him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I *am here*, Lord. And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one named Saul, a man of Tarsus: for behold, he prayeth; and he hath seen a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hands on him, that he might receive his sight. But Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard from many of this man, how much evil he did to thy saints at Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will shew him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake. And Ananias departed, and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and he arose and was baptized; and he took food and was strengthened.

And he was certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. And straightway in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus, that he is the Son of God. And all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that in Jerusalem made havock of them which called on this name? and he had come hither for this intent, that he might bring them bound before the chief priests. But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the Christ.

And when many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel together to kill him: but their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates also day and night that they might kill him: but his disciples took him by night, and let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket.

And when he was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. And he was with them going in and going out at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord: and he spake and disputed against the Grecian Jews; but they went about to kill him. And when the brethren knew it, they brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

In his furious hatred of the Christians Saul even went so far as to ask the high-priest for letters to the Jewish congregations at Damascus, so that he might there, as the authorized instrument of the Council, seize all those who confessed faith in Christ as the only way to heaven, and bring them to Jerusalem to be tried as apostates and heretics (1 sq.). Having come near the place of his destination, he saw himself all at once, at bright midday (xxii. 6), surrounded by an extraordinary brilliant light from heaven (3); and when for fear he had fallen to the ground, he heard the reproachful question, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* (4). Conversant as he was with the Old Testament revelations, he immediately recognized a divine manifestation; but not being conscious of acting against the God of his fathers, he ventured the question, who it was that addressed him so unexpectedly, and received the answer that it was no one else than Jesus of Nazareth, exalted to divine majesty and power, but yet

persecuted by him in His believers (5). At the same time, however, he was told where he, convinced and changed by this undeniable revelation of Jesus as the Christ, would get further information as to his future course, namely, in the same city that he had intended to enter as the mortal enemy of Jesus and His disciples (6). But while Saul beheld Jesus in His heavenly glory (1 Cor. ix. 1; xv. 8) and distinctly heard His voice, his companions, though, awe-struck (xxvi. 14), they noticed the extraordinary occurrence, had only a general, confused impression, neither seeing anybody nor understanding the voice they heard (7; comp. xxii. 9). The heavenly light, however, that Saul had been permitted to gaze into, had not only compelled him to close his eyes, but even deprived him of his sight, so that he was constrained to have himself led into the city by the hand (8). And in this condition he remained for three days, sunk in deep, remorseful meditation, which was not even broken by eating or drinking (9). At Damascus a Christian, Ananias, was commanded by Christ Himself to go and see Saul, who by prayer and a vision would be prepared for his visit (10 sqq.). As Ananias very naturally was astonished to get this commission, knowing the history and the plans of Saul (13 sq.), Christ revealed to him that this very man, with his burning zeal and untiring activity for what he considers right, will now, after he has been convinced of the divine truth of the Gospel, be an extraordinarily fit and blessed instrument in the hands of Christ to announce Him, by the preaching of the Gospel, as the revealed Messiah and Saviour of the world to heathen nations especially, and also to the members of the Old Testament people of God (15). For, as in an extraordinary manner he had made the Christians suffer on account of the Gospel, so he will also in an extraordinary

manner bear the sufferings of a confessor and minister of that Gospel, whereunto Christ Himself will prepare and strengthen him (16). Thereupon Ananias went to Saul and announced to him, in the name of the Lord Jesus who had manifested Himself to him as the Messiah, that he was to receive his eyesight again, and also to be endowed with the gifts of the Holy Ghost in the abundant measure of the first Christians (17). And forthwith Saul's blindness was miraculously removed, and the first thing he did was to have himself openly received into the Christian Church by baptism (18). Then, of course, he also took food and regained his strength; for he was called to do a great work. And this work he began at once, holding communion with the Christians at Damascus for the comparatively short time that he stayed there now, and preaching in the synagogues the blessed news that in Jesus of Nazareth the divine-human Redeemer of the world has appeared (19 sq.), to the amazement of all his hearers, knowing, as they did, his history and plans (21). But he grew more and more efficient in his work and proved the true Messiahship of Jesus in such a powerful way that every gainsayer was confounded (22). After a longer time had elapsed, he was forced to leave Damascus, since his Jewish opponents had resolved to do away with this, in their eyes, dangerous follower of the Nazarene (23); but as they even guarded the gates of the city continually, he could only escape their hands by the love-taught contrivance of those that through his preaching had become believers in Jesus the Christ (24 sq.). Now he went to Jerusalem, the city that he had not seen again since years ago he left it with such sinister designs, and, as was natural, desired to be in fraternal intercourse with the Christians there. At first he did not succeed in this, since they could not believe

in the reality of his conversion (26). But Barnabas introduced him to the apostles and told them of his miraculous conversion, proved to be genuine by his subsequent conduct (27). Then Saul was admitted to free and full intercourse with the Christians; and in his courageous preaching of the Gospel he especially tried to convince the Jews from foreign countries of the futility of their objection, but only with the result that they endeavored to kill him (28 sq.). Hereupon, yielding to the loving anxiety of his fellow-believers, he left Jerusalem and went back to his native country (30). Here he may be supposed to have preached the Gospel, especially to the Jews.

Ver. 1. **Yet.** Comp. viii. 3. **Breathing.** He was full of **threatening and slaughter**, and he breathed it out; it was what animated him and governed his activity; he threatened to slay the Christians, and tried to do so, and did so, wherever and whenever he had an opportunity. **Of the Lord.** Viz. Jesus the Christ, the Saviour of the human race; that was what made it such a grievous sin. **High-priest.** If Paul's conversion took place A. D. 34, as many suppose, Caiaphas was still the governing high-priest, being deposed A. D. 36. (Comp. Matt. xxvi. 3.) His successors were Jonathan (A. D. 36 and 37) and his brother Theophilus (from A. D. 37 on). But perhaps Annas was still the real ruler. (Comp. iv. 6.) The high-priest was, as a rule, the president of the Council (iv. 5 sq.), which, in religious matters, was recognized by Jews and Romans as the highest tribunal also outside of Palestine.—Ver. 2. **Letters.** Of recommendation and authority, credentials. **Damascus.** The old capital of Syria (comp. Gen. xiv. 15; xv. 2), inhabited by so many Jews that later on Nero could put 10,000 of them to death. **Synagogues.** Comp. vi. 9. It would seem that so far the

Christians still retained their membership in the Jewish congregations, regarding themselves, as in truth they were, the real and genuine members of the people of God, the true Israelites. **That were of the Way.** Confessed and walked the only true way to heaven, viz. that taught by Christ and His apostles (comp. xviii. 25; xix. 9; xxii. 4; xxiv. 14, 22); this "way" determined their religious and moral nature (genitive of quality). **Whether men or women.** Lit. *not only men, but also women*; so fanatical and cruel he was. **Bound.** Fettered as criminals. **To Jerusalem.** The seat of the Council, the religious capital of the Jews.—Ver. 3. **Shone round about him.** Lit. *surrounded him as lightning*, so suddenly and bright. "In the full splendor of an oriental sun at noon, around the Pharisee leader and his companions the blinding light of the divine glory. It was the Shekinah, the glory in which Christ now dwells. Rays of this glory now and again have been permitted to fall on men's eyes. It shone round Moses when he had been with the God of Israel on the mount; it rested at intervals on the golden mercy-seat of the ark, between the cherubim" (Lev. xvi. 2, 13); "it filled the temple of Solomon on the dedication morning" (1 Kings viii. 10 sq.; comp. Ex. xl. 34 sq.); "it shone round the transfigured Jesus and the glorified Moses and Elias on Tabor; it flashed round the heads of the disciples in tongues of fire, while they prayed and waited for the Holy Ghost on the first Pentecost morning; and years after, John in his lonely watch at Patmos saw it encompassing the Son of man, when, awe-struck, he fell at the feet of the glorified Redeemer as one that was dead" (Rev. i. 9 sqq.). "In this blinding light Saul perceived the glorified body of Jesus. This we gather from Ananias' words, verse 17." (*Pop. Com.*)—Ver. 4. **Saul, Saul.** Earnestly warning. **Why.** What right hast

thou? what have I done to thee or others that would warrant thee in acting as thou doest? **Me.** In my disciples, trying to destroy my Church. (Comp. Luke x. 16; Matt. xxv. 40, 45.)—Ver. 5. **I . . . thou.** Both emphatic, showing the hostile attitude that Saul occupied towards such an exalted being. Jesus the Ruler of heaven and earth, and Saul persecuting Him: what a contrast! The words found in the Authorized Version: "*It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me do? And the Lord said unto him,*" are not found in the oldest and best manuscripts; the first clause is evidently taken from xxvi. 14, and the rest is a reminiscence of xxii. 10, the whole being, perhaps, first written by a copyist on the margin as a supplementary parallel, and then by another one introduced into the text as a part of it. The astonished question of Saul, **Who art thou, Lord?** proceeded from his conviction that he had acted in conformity with the will of the God of Israel (comp. xxvi. 9; 1 Tim. i. 13), and proves that he was in no way prepared for what occurred, and that, consequently, it did not take place merely in his imagination as a result and product of a troubled conscience, but that it was an entirely unexpected, supernatural and miraculous event of objective reality.—Ver. 6. **But.** I will not now speak further of what thou hast been doing so far, *but* rather of what thou art to do in the future. **Must do.** Moral necessity, if he would not act wilfully and consciously against the manifest will of God.—Ver. 7. **Voice.** Or, *sound.* (Comp. John xii. 28 sq.)—Ver. 8. The miraculous blindness of Saul was certainly not the effect of imagination or even of an *internal* vision; only an *external*, real appearance could produce it. So Luke represents it here; and so does Paul every time he speaks of it (xxii. 6 sqq.; xxvi.

12 sqq. ; 1 Cor. ix. 1 ; xv. 8) ; and in the last passages cited he places his having seen the Lord Jesus on a level with that of the other apostles, founding his true apostleship on it. So there is no denying that the Bible, and Paul himself, represents the appearance of Christ granted to him as an *externally objective* one ; and only he that does not believe in the possibility or reality of true miracles will deny that this was its character. Moreover, the object of this miracle, as stated explicitly in the sacred narrative, was an eminently proper one, similar to that of the appearance of Christ after His resurrection granted to James (comp. i. 14) and the other apostles (1 Cor. xv. 7), viz. to make them eye and ear witnesses of His resurrection and Messiahship and thus fit instruments for founding and propagating the Church.—Ver. 10. **The Lord.** Christ. **In a vision.** Whether waking or sleeping, is uncertain. **Behold, I** (am here): I am ready to do Thy bidding ; a Hebraism.—Ver. 11. **Arise.** Comp. viii. 26. The street mentioned here still exists in Damascus ; and the house where Judas lived, as also that of Ananias, is still shown, perhaps rightly so, since in oriental countries, when no violent destruction takes place, customs and dwellings remain for many centuries. **Tarsus.** The capital of Cilicia in southeastern Asia Minor, on the river Cydnus, at that time large and populous, renowned for its Greek learning and numerous schools of philosophers ; a free city and not under the jurisdiction of a Roman governor ; now called Tarso, or Tersos, and much reduced in size and importance. (Comp. xxii. 3.)—Ver. 12. **He hath seen.** In a vision that was to prepare him for the actual visit of Ananias. **A man named Ananias.** Before this vision Saul had not known Ananias either by sight or by name ; this the text indicates by the above expression, instead of simply saying, *thee*. **Laying his hands**



**on him.** A symbolic act, indicative of what really was conferred by divine power. (Comp. vi. 6.)—Ver. 13. **To thy saints.** Every true Christian is a *saint*, that is, *separated* from the sinful world and *dedicated*, or *consecrated*, to God; for this is what saint, holy, and words of like import mean. The holiness that makes them saints is, first of all, the holiness of Jesus Christ imputed to them by faith, and then also, in a secondary sense, the holiness wrought in them by the regenerating and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. (Comp. Rom. i. 7.) *Christ's* saints the Christians are, because their holiness, in either sense, is owing to Him and His redemptive work, and becomes theirs merely by their becoming and being His through faith. Without Christ there can be no saint and no holiness on earth after the fall; hence, every true saint is Christ's, owning Him as his Saviour and Lord.—Ver. 14. **Chief priests.** Comp. iv. 6. In this matter they were the leading members of the Council. **Call upon thy name.** Comp. vii. 59. A true Christian calls upon Christ's name, i. e. calls upon Christ, prays to Him, in accordance with His revelation, as the Saviour of men.—Ver. 15. **Go thy way.** Do what I have commanded, go to Saul, without any further objections. **Chosen vessel.** Organ or instrument selected as a specially suitable one, namely, by and through grace; lit. *a vessel of selection*, the genitive of the noun (gen. of quality) standing by way of emphasis for the adjective. **Kings.** Viz. of the Gentiles. **And kings.** Lit. *not only Gentiles* (in general) *but also kings*. Paul was to be especially the apostle of Gentiles. **And the children of Israel.** This was to be second in importance, though Paul as a rule began in the natural way, preaching first to the Jews as the chosen people of the Old Testament. (Rom. i. 16; Acts xiii. 46.)—Ver. 16. **I.** Emphatic; he

is Christ's servant, and Christ his Master. **Show him.** In the way in which he will be led. **For my name's sake.** In order that my Gospel may be preached and I become known to men as their Saviour. (Comp. v. 41.) By suffering much for this purpose he will show himself *a chosen vessel*. Some suppose that Christ by a special revelation made known to Paul, at least in general, all that he would have to suffer for the Gospel, and thus prepared him for it.—Ver. 17. **Departed.** Without any further remonstrance and objection. **Laying his hands on him.** A symbolic action. (Comp. vi. 6.) **Brother.** In the Christian sense, fellow-Christian. (Comp. Matt. xxiii. 8.) **Be filled with the Holy Ghost.** Comp. ii. 4.—Ver. 18. **As it were scales.** The effect was the same as if scales that had covered his eyes and prevented them from seeing had now fallen off. Some suppose that a *substance* like scales is here spoken of; and the wording of the text would seem to favor that idea.—Ver. 19. **Took food.** Comp. 9. **Was strengthened.** Bodily, after the excitement and fasting. **Was . . . with.** Had intercourse, associated with them.—Ver. 20. **In the synagogues.** Comp. 15. **Proclaimed.** Repeatedly, continually (Imperfect). **Jesus.** The sum and substance of the Gospel, not only as to His work but also as to His person, which is the necessary basis of His work. When Jesus, the Son of Mary, is not recognized and preached as at the same time the true Son of the true God, there is no Gospel and no Christian religion and faith. **That he is.** And no one else; **he** : this despised and maltreated person. To preach this in the synagogue, to the Jews publicly, certainly required courage and faith.—Ver. 21. **Were amazed, and said.** As often as they heard him, and also afterwards (Imperfect; comp. 20). **Made havoc of them.** Destroyed, overthrew them, imprisoning and having put to death the individuals and

thus destroying the congregations. **This name.** Comp. v. 41. *To call on Christ's name* is to take refuge with Him as the revealed Saviour and Redeemer, and to worship and adore him as such. (Comp. 14.)—Ver. 22. **This.** And no one else.—Ver. 23. **Many days.** This cannot be the same time as that called in verse 19 *certain days*. To us those seem to be right who understand the latter expression as referring to the activity of Paul at Damascus before his journey to Arabia (Gal. i. 17), and the former as embracing the sojourn in that country as also the activity of Paul at Damascus after his return from there. Luke had no occasion to speak of that sojourn at all, intending, as he does, simply to show the treatment Paul received at the hands of his countrymen, and which eventually compelled him to go to heathen countries and thus, in the providence of God that rules everything, to become the apostle of the Gentiles.—Ver. 24. **Their plot became known to Saul.** Hence he concluded to leave the place. (Comp. viii. 1.) **They watched the gates.** Of course, after having gotten permission from the governor (comp. 2 Cor. xi. 32), using, perhaps, the soldiers furnished by him, so that what they did was done in his name and thus by him.—Ver. 25. **Through the wall.** An opening already existing, or being made for that purpose; some suppose that the window of a house built on the wall is meant. (Comp. 2 Cor. xi. 33.)—Ver. 26. **When he was come to Jerusalem.** Three years after his conversion. (Gal. i. 18.) **Assayed.** Tried, attempted. **Not believing,** etc. During his stay in Arabia Paul does not seem to have been in communication with the Christians in Palestine; and that retirement may have been the cause that his conversion was not spoken of more, or was even doubted.—Ver. 27. **Barnabas.** Comp. iv. 36. Perhaps he was acquainted with Saul from

former times, or had lately been at Damascus, or had received news from there.—Ver. 28. **Going in and out.** Comp. i. 21. **In the name of the Lord.** The revelation of Christ, the Gospel, was the sphere in which his preaching moved and centred.—Ver. 29. **Grecian Jews.** Lit. *Hellenists*. Comp. vi. 1, 9. **Went about.** Undertook, attempted.—Ver. 30. **When the brethren knew it.** Lit. *had come to know it*, and Christ distinctly commanded it (xxii. 17 sqq.). **Sent him forth.** By land, as it would seem. (Gal. i. 21.) **Cæsarea.** Comp. viii. 40. **Tarsus.** Comp. 11.

### (B.) PETER'S WORK AT LYDDA AND JOPPA.

31-43. So the church throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified; and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, was multiplied.

And it came to pass, as Peter went throughout all parts, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda. And there he found a certain man named Æneas, which had kept his bed eight years; for he was palsied. And Peter said unto him, Æneas, Jesus Christ healeth thee: arise, and make thy bed. And straightway he arose. And all that dwelt at Lydda and in Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and alms-deeds which she did. And it came to pass in those days, that she fell sick, and died: and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper chamber, And as Lydda was nigh unto Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men unto him, intreating him, Delay not to come on unto us. And Peter arose and went with them. And when he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning to the body, he said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes; and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa: and many believed on the Lord. And it came to pass, that he abode many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

The principal instrument of violent opposition to the

Gospel having himself become a convert, the whole Church in Palestine enjoyed peace and prosperity, growing both internally, in spiritual life, and externally, by the accession of those that by the assistance and operation of the Holy Ghost were induced to join the number of believers (31). During that time Peter made a tour of inspection through all the congregations of Palestine, and thus came also to Lydda (32). Here he met a man that for many years had been confined to his bed by the palsy (33). Being assured in his spirit that Jesus intended by the miraculous healing of this sufferer to prove Himself the Messiah, Peter announced this to him, telling him at the same time to manifest his changed condition by immediately doing himself what up to this time others had to do for him (34). This miracle, evidently wrought by the exalted Christ through His apostle, made such an impression upon the inhabitants, not only of Lydda, but of the whole region, that they became believers in Christ (35). Whilst Peter was at Lydda, in the neighboring city of Joppa there died a Christian woman who had been a prominent member of the Church, excelling in good works in general, but especially in providing for the wants of the poor (36 sq.). Hence, the Christians, having learned that Peter was near by, and hoping that by the grace and power of Christ he would restore her to life, sent for him at once (38). And he without delay complied with their request, and after his arrival was immediately led into the room where the corpse had been placed, the widows of the place being present and lamenting the death of their benefactress whose works survived her (39). After a fervent prayer Peter in the power of Christ gave back the dead woman to life and thus to those that had missed her so much (40 sq.). This undeniable manifestation of Jesus the Christ again moved many to

believe in Him (42). Peter now stayed a considerable time at Joppa, taking up his abode with a man who was a namesake of his (43).

Ver. 31. **Galilee.** This cradle of Christianity, the home of most of the apostles (Judas Iscariot seems to have been the only Judæan among them; compare my Brief Commentary on Matt. x. 4), where also Christ had His usual abode (comp. Matt. iv. 12 sqq.), is mentioned immediately after Judæa, the main province of Western Palestine and the seat of the temple and the mother congregation, though in geographical order Samaria would have been the second to mention. That there were followers of Christ in Samaria is regarded as a matter of course. All these believers formed one Church, one body of Christ; hence, the singular, **the Church. Being edified.** Built up, internally, growing in faith, love, and hope, according to the constant use of the word in the original. **Walking in the fear of the Lord.** The manifestation of the edification. **In the fear.** Or, *by the fear*, the fear of the Lord being the norm or governing principle of their life. **And in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.** Is best joined to the words that follow. **Comfort.** Seems to mean here, in accordance with John xiv. 16, the work of the Holy Ghost in general.—Ver. 32. **Throughout all parts.** Better, *through all the saints*, or Christians; the noun is to be supplied in Greek. Peter visited all the congregations in that region. **Lydda.** A town near the Mediterranean, now a village called Ludd, in Old Testament times called Lod (1 Chron. viii. 12; Ezra ii. 33), under the later Roman emperors a considerable city called Diospolis.—Ver. 33. **Æneas.** Probably a Christian, since Peter cured him without any special entreating on the part of the sick man or his friends, and seems to have found him among the *saints*; though some think

the indefinite expression, *a certain man*, points in the opposite direction. **Palsied.** Comp. viii. 7.—Ver. 34. **Healeth.** This very moment.—Ver. 35. **Sharon.** The maritime plain north of Lydda, very fertile. (Comp. Song of Sol. ii. 1.) **All.** A popular expression, not to be pressed. (Comp. viii. 1; xxvi. 20).—Ver. 36. **Joppa.** Then, as now, the principal harbor of Palestine, now called Jaffa, in Hebrew Japho (Jonah i. 3), the “Beauty.” **Disciple.** Lit. *female disciple*. **Tabitha.** In the Aramaic vernacular of the country (comp. xxi. 40; Mark v. 41), the same as **Dorcas** in Greek, both words signifying *gazelle*, the name of an animal whose graceful form and lustrous eyes have caused the people of the Orient to make it the symbol of female beauty, and to give its name to their daughters.—Ver. 37. **Upper chamber.** Comp. i. 13.—Ver. 38. **To come on.** Lit. *to go through* (comp. 32), to pass on, continue the journey. **Unto us.** Until coming to us.—Ver. 39. **Coats and garments.** The tunics, or undergarments, worn next to the skin, and the upper garments, cloaks or mantles, thrown over the tunic. **While she was with them.** So much the more she was missed now.—Ver. 40. **Peter put them all forth.** He did not want to be disturbed in his prayer, the human requisite and means of the miracle. (Comp. Mark xi. 24; Matt. xvii. 21;—1 Kings xvii. 19 sqq.; 2 Kings iv. 33.) **She sat up.** Being perfectly well again, not only slowly recovering. (Comp. Luke vii. 15).—Ver. 41. **And widows.** These especially.—Ver. 43. **A tanner.** Considered unclean by the Jews because he had to do with dead animals (Lev. xi. 24 sq., 39). Peter was not deterred by this, knowing that the ceremonial law was intended for the Old Testament time of preparation only, though, as the next chapter shows, he was not yet prepared to draw all the consequences.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE CONVERSION OF CORNELIUS.

#### (A.) *The Preparation for this Conversion.*

1-23. Now *there was* a certain man in Cæsarea, Cornelius by name, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision openly, as it were about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in unto him, and saying to him, Cornelius. And he, fastening his eyes upon him, and being affrighted, said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are gone up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and fetch one Simon, who is surnamed Peter: he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side. And when the angel that spake unto him was departed, he called two of his household-servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; and having rehearsed all things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

Now on the morrow, as they were on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour: and he became hungry, and desired to eat: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance; and he beholdeth the heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet, let down by four corners upon the earth: wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts and creeping things of the earth and fowls of the heaven. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean. And a voice *came* unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, make not thou common. And this was done thrice: and straightway the vessel was received up into heaven.

Now while Peter was much perplexed in himself what the vision which he had seen might mean, behold, the men that were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood before the gate, and called and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodging there. And while Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold,



three men seek thee. But arise, and get thee down, and go with them, nothing doubting : for I have sent them. And Peter went down to the men, and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek : what is the cause wherefore ye are come ? And they said, Cornelius a centurion, a righteous man and one that feareth God, and well reported of by all the nation of the Jews, was warned *of God* by a holy angel to send for thee into the house, and to hear words from thee. So he called them in and lodged them.

At Cæsarea, the residence of the Roman procurator, there was at this time stationed a Roman officer named Cornelius (1). This man, a heathen by birth and education, had been led with his whole family to acknowledge the only true God in his heart, and was leading the life of a devout Jew (2). One day, at the time of evening prayer, he had an unmistakable vision, God sending one of His heavenly messengers to him (3). Of course, awe seized him at the unexpected presence of his celestial visitor, and he respectfully asked what it meant. The answer was that God had been pleased graciously to take notice of his zealous walk in Old Testament faith and piety (4), and hence now intended to lead him further in saving knowledge, and this by the instrumentality of Peter, for whom he is to send immediately (5 sq.). In obedience to this divine command, Cornelius without delay despatched three of his intimate subordinates, who, at the same time, shared his religious convictions (7 sq.). When these messengers arrived at Joppa, Peter had already been prepared for their request. Having ascended the flat roof of the house where he stayed, for the undisturbed performance of his midday devotion, he felt hungry, and whilst preparations for his dinner were being made, a trance or an ecstasy came upon him (9 sq.), and he saw a kind of vessel shaped like a huge linen sheet let down by its four corners from the open heaven (11), containing all sorts of animals, unclean as well as clean (12). At the same time he heard a voice

calling upon him to take any of these animals for food (13). But he, with his Old Testament views in part still clinging to him, looked upon this as a temptation to depart from his life-long rectitude in this respect, and therefore declined to comply (14). Again he heard a voice warning him not to pronounce unclean and forbidden what God Himself had just now by His command pronounced clean and pure, declaring thereby the Old Testament time of preparation with its temporary pedagogical regulations and limitations at an end (15). In order to show Peter the reality and importance of his vision, this divine invitation and declaration was given three times (16). And just when he was meditating upon what it might all mean, being contrary to the views he had held hitherto, the messengers of Cornelius had found his abode, and were asking for him (17 sq.). At the same time the Holy Spirit told him to break off his meditations and without any misgivings to follow the men whom God Himself had caused to be sent for him (19 sq.). And Peter, going down and learning the cause of their call on him, no doubt began to see that his vision was now to receive a practical explanation, teaching him and all men that in the time of the New Testament dispensation no difference is to be made between men, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, as to their admission into the Church; and hence without any scruples he called those men in and entertained them (21-23).

Ver. 1. **Cæsarea.** Comp. viii. 40. **Italian band.** Or, *cohort*, that formed, perhaps, the body-guard of the procurator (comp. Matt. xxvii. 2) and the reliable nucleus of his soldiery. Cornelius was an officer commanding a part of this cohort, a **centurion**, or commander of about one hundred or a company. (Comp. Matt. viii. 5.) A *cohort* was the tenth part of a legion, or about 600

men.—Ver. 2. **A devout man, and one that feared God.** The latter clause explains the former: his devotion was the true one since he was fearing the true God. Though the latter expression is used to denote proselytes of the gate (comp. viii. 27 ;—xiii. 16, 26), Cornelius cannot be regarded as such a one because he, together with his family, is described as simply a Gentile in vers. 28, 34 sq., 45 ; xi. 1 sqq., whilst proselytes of the gate were not so regarded. But though not a proselyte *formally*, Cornelius in his religious conviction and practice came near being a proselyte of the gate. What he did was considered as an important duty of a Jew. (Comp. Matt. vi. 1 sqq.)—Ver. 3. **Vision.** “A sight divinely granted in an ecstasy, or in sleep” (GRIMM-THAYER); here the former, as the time of day shows. An ecstasy is that condition of man when by divine operation his mind is drawn off from the things that surround him and is made to see and hear supersensual communications which in his natural state he could not be cognizant of. **The ninth hour.** Comp. iii. 1. He was at that time occupied with prayer (30).—Ver. 4. **Fastening his eyes upon him.** In order to convince himself that he was not mistaken in his first impression. **Being affrighted.** Comp. Luke i. 12. Since the fall the sudden appearance of God or His messengers frightens man, because he knows, and instinctively feels, that he is a sinner and not fit to commune with God. (Comp. Gen. iii. 8 ; Judges xiii. 22.) **For a memorial.** Reminding God of thee, causing Him to have a gracious pleasure in thee and to determine to lead thee further in saving knowledge. This is, of course, as far as the expression is concerned, speaking of God in a human way.—Ver. 5 sq. **One Simon.** Lit. *a certain Simon*, so indefinite because he was altogether unknown to Cornelius. Hence also his abode is

accurately described. **By the sea side.** Because of his occupation, which made it necessary to live at a distance from the main part of the city, and also made it convenient to have water near.—Ver. 7. **A devout soldier.** One that in religious matters agreed with his master (2). That the two **household-servants** were of the same nature is presupposed, they belonging to *his house* (2). No others were suitable for such a purpose.—Ver. 8. **Rehearsed.** Recounted, told in detail. He had no secrets for them in these matters.—Ver. 9. **On the morrow.** It was a journey of about thirty miles in a south-western direction. **The housetop.** Comp. i. 13; Matt. xxiv. 17. **The sixth hour.** Comp. iii. 1.—Ver. 10. **He fell into a trance.** Lit. *An ecstasy came upon him.* (Comp. 3; xxii. 17.) In such a state man is passive, and he does not get into it by any activity of his own.—Ver. 11. **Beholdeth.** A vivid description, as if occurring before our very eyes (present tense). The verb denotes seeing with interest and amazement. **Let down.** So that Peter could look in and see what it contained (xi. 6). Ver. 12. **Fowls of the heaven.** Wild, not tamed or cared for by men. (Comp. Matt. vi. 26.) *Fish* are not mentioned because they could not be alive in a linen sheet, out of water.—Ver. 13. **Rise.** Comp. viii. 26.—Ver. 14. **Not so.** Lit. *by no means.* **Common.** Profane, not permitted by God to His people, who also with regard to food were to be separated from the mass of humanity; the opposite to holy. **Unclean,** viz. levitically, according to the ceremonial law, denoting a member of the holy people. (Comp. Lev. xi.; Deut. xiv.).—Ver. 15. **What God hath cleansed.** *Actually* by the death of Christ, which did away with all the types of the Old Testament, fulfilling the very last of them; *formally* by this command given to Peter. Man's views

and actions must be in accordance with God's if they are to be well-pleasing to Him. **Thou.** Emphatic, over against **God.**—Ver. 16. **Thrice.** An emphatic and solemn repetition. (Comp. John xxi. 15 sqq.; Matt. xxvi. 39 sqq.; 2 Cor. xii. 8.) **Straightway.** As soon as it had served its purpose.—Ver. 17. **In himself.** Meditating upon what he had seen, the vision now being over. **Might mean.** Peter knew that this vision meant something more than merely the abrogation of the ceremonial laws regarding food; but he waited for God to explain authentically and authoritatively, by word or act, what was meant. **Having made inquiry.** Lit. *having found out by asking.*—Ver. 18. **Called.** To get some one of the people in the house to hear them and answer their question. **Surnamed Peter.** Comp. John i. 42; Matt. xvi. 18.—Ver. 19. **Thought.** Weighed in his mind, pondered, considered. **Seek thee.** Lit. are here *seeking thee.*—Ver. 20. **But arise.** The thought, it seems, must be supplied, When thou hearest what they want it may strike thee as singular and unusual; *but arise*, etc. **Get thee down.** Lit. *go down, descend.* **Nothing doubting.** Having doubts or misgivings in no direction or particular. (Comp. xi. 12.) **I.** Emphatic; the vision, vers. 3 sqq., had been sent by God; hence He was the cause that these messengers were sent to Peter.—Ver. 21. **I.** Emphatic; no one else.—Ver. 22. Comp. vers. 1 sq. **Righteous.** Here, of course, not in the Christian or New Testament sense of being righteous through faith in Christ and sanctified by the Holy Ghost; but in the Old Testament sense of leading a life in accordance with the Law; or, perhaps better yet, in the general human sense of giving to every man his dues, doing his duty in every direction, so that the words, **one that feareth God**, viz. the true God, add a new and higher attribute. **Well reported of,**

etc. Every Jew that knew him respected him. This the messengers mentioned as an inducement to Peter to go with them without any hesitancy or doubt. **Was warned of God.** Lit. *an oracle, or a divine response, was given him*, in answer to his prayers which, as a matter of course, included the petition to be led to further knowledge of God and His gracious will. **Words.** Further communications and revelations with regard to religious matters. (Comp. xi. 14.)

(B.) *The Conversion and Baptism of Cornelius.*

23-48. And on the morrow he arose and went forth with them, and certain of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him. And on the morrow they entered into Cæsarea. And Cornelius was waiting for them, having called together his kinsmen and his near friends. And when it came to pass that Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter raised him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. And as he talked with him, he went in and findeth many come together: and he said unto them, Ye yourselves know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to join himself or come unto one of another nation; and yet unto me hath God shewed that I should not call any man common or unclean: wherefore also I came without gainsaying, when I was sent for. I ask therefore with what intent ye sent for me. And Cornelius said, Four days ago, until this hour, I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house; and behold, a man stood before me in bright apparel, and saith, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa, and call unto thee Simon, who is surnamed Peter; he lodgeth in the house of Simon a tanner, by the sea side. Forthwith therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord. And Peter opened his mouth, and said,

Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him. The word which he sent unto the children of Israel, preaching good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all)—that saying ye yourselves know, which was published throughout all Judæa, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; even Jesus of Nazareth, how that God anointed him with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing

good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil ; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem ; whom also they slew, hanging him on a tree. Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is he which is ordained of God *to be* the Judge of quick and dead. To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we ? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

The day after the arrival of the messengers Peter went with them to their master, taking some fellow-believers along as witnesses of the extraordinary events that could be anticipated (23). When on the following day they reached Cæsarea they found Cornelius waiting for them, surrounded by his relatives and intimate friends (24). Coming into the house Peter was received by Cornelius as a superhuman being (25) ; but, of course, he declined this honor as not becoming him (26). In friendly converse with his host Peter then entered the room, where he found a large assembly (27). These he, in the first place, reminded of the unusual condition and company in which he as a Jew found himself, but at the same time told them that he was there in humble obedience to an express revelation of God showing him that the New Testament time of equality of all men before God had now come ; and then, since the occasion was so unusual and important, he asked for the authentic and public statement of the reason for calling him there

(28 sq.). Thereupon Cornelius related the divine vision he had had (30-32), and expressed his joy that Peter had come and their readiness in the fear of the omnipresent God to listen to whatever he had been commissioned to tell them (33). And now, in a solemn discourse, Peter states that, after the experiences just now made, he can no more doubt that with regard to admitting men into saving communion with Christ and His Church God does not make any difference between men as to their nationality or descent, but merely has regard to their use of the light and knowledge that they had enjoyed hitherto (34 sq.). Then he reminds his hearers of what they, more or less, already know concerning the Gospel of the divine Redeemer (36), the Gospel that, after the preparatory work of John the Baptist, had been proclaimed throughout Palestine (37); and concerning Christ Himself who, during His life on earth, as the divinely-appointed and legitimated Messiah, everywhere proved Himself the Conqueror of Satan and hence the Redeemer of the human race (38), and, notwithstanding all these public and undeniable proofs of His Messiahship, was by His own people even handed over to the heathen to suffer the death of a vile criminal (39). And now Peter announces to his audience that this very Jesus was by God Himself raised from the dead and thus proclaimed the Saviour of the world, being manifested in the most unmistakable way to those who had already been chosen by God as eye and ear witnesses not only of the life and death of Christ, but also of the truth of His resurrection (40 sq.); whom He Himself also commissioned to proclaim all this, in the first place to the Jews, and to announce everywhere the solemn truth that He, and no one else, is the divinely-appointed Judge of every man, and that, consequently, the eternal lot of man



will depend on his relation to that Jesus (42). For, as already the prophecies of the Old Testament show, forgiveness of sin and eternal life can be had only by believing in Him who in all His words and deeds has revealed Himself as the Saviour of our fallen and lost race (43).—Peter had only begun his discourse when God Himself manifestly approved of the proceedings by pouring out the Holy Ghost upon the hearers in a manner similar to the Pentecost miracle, the effect being also here the ecstatic praise of God for His unspeakable love for sinful man; and the companions of Peter, being of Jewish descent and still imbued with the prejudices of their nation, were amazed to see that heathens received the gifts of the Holy Ghost without first passing through Judaism by submitting to its rites, especially circumcision (44-46). Peter, however, now could not but express his full conviction that those whom God Himself had so manifestly declared His own were entitled to immediate admission into the Church by the sacrament of initiation instituted by Christ Himself and binding upon all that can receive it; and he therefore commanded his companions to baptize them on their faith in Jesus the Christ. At the request of the new Christians Peter then stayed with them for some time, also thereby recognizing them as full brethren in the faith (47 sq.).

Ver. 23. **On the morrow.** Of the third day after the departure of the messengers from Cæsarea; for, as the next verse shows, the journey took more than a day from one of the cities to the other. **Certain of the brethren.** Six in all, as xi. 12 is stated.—Ver. 24. **On the morrow.** Of the fourth day. (Comp. 30.) **His kinsmen,** etc. Who, no doubt to some extent at least, shared his religious convictions.—Ver. 25. **Entered.** Viz. through the door leading from the street into the house, or the open court

enclosed by the four sides or wings of the oriental house. **Fell down**, etc. Cornelius seems as yet not to have been entirely free from all heathenish superstition; after the vision he expected a sort of superhuman being, similar to those heroes of old of whom heathen mythology was full. That his humble greeting was not intended merely for a man of eminent position and authority, is shown by Peter's reply in the next verse.—Ver. 26. **I myself also.** Just as you. (Comp. xiv. 11 sqq.)—Ver. 28. **How that.** That; better, *how unlawful it is.* **An unlawful thing.** Not because of an express divine commandment in the Old Testament, but according to Jewish tradition and custom. The expression, **to join himself**, however, signifying to form an intimate connection, to enter into the closest relations, seems to include fellowship in eating and drinking (comp. xi. 3), and **to come unto one**, would then also mean for that purpose; and with regard to food the Jews had to be very careful in order not to violate the ceremonial regulations of the Law, and hence, as a rule, rightly abstained from eating together with Gentiles. (Comp. Gal. ii. 11 sqq.) **And unto me.** The **me** is emphatic, over against the **ye yourselves**, the revelation given him being contrasted with what they knew without being told by anybody else. Notwithstanding that Jewish custom he acts as he does because God has revealed to him in a symbolical vision that the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament are no more binding on the children of God. **Common or unclean.** In a religious sense, as to admission into the Church, on the basis of nationality. (Comp. 14.)—Ver. 29. **Without gainsaying.** Without raising any objections. **With what intent.** For what reason.—Ver. 30. **Four days ago.** Comp. 23 sq. **Until this hour I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house.** This seems to us to be the only correct transla-

tion of the somewhat difficult original, as far as the sense is concerned. Four days ago he was observing the time of evening prayer (3) and was occupied in prayer up to that time of the day at which he was now speaking, hence, for a considerable time. He states, in the first place, what he was doing, viz. observing the time of evening prayer ; in the second place, at what time during this extended prayer the heavenly vision appeared to him. **In bright apparel.** Becoming and indicating a denizen of heaven. (Comp. i. 10.)—Ver. 31. **Are had in remembrance in the sight of God.** Are before God, seen by Him, and remembered. (Comp. 4.)—Ver. 33. **In the sight of God.** Cornelius knows Him to be present and is determined to act in conformity with that knowledge, viz. in the fear of God.—Ver. 34. **Opened his mouth.** Comp. viii. 35. **Of a truth.** Lit. *on truth*, viz. my perception is founded ; it is no mere idea and fancy. **Perceive.** Understand, learn, comprehend. **No respecter of persons.** Not having, in matters pertaining to salvation, regard to man's external condition and position, discriminating against the one or the other on such grounds. *Person* in this connection, a Hebraism, denotes the external appearance or condition of a man.—Ver. 35. **He that feareth him and worketh righteousness.** Not in the New Testament sense of a regenerated and sanctified person, but in the sense in which it could be predicated of Cornelius, and is predicated of him in vers. 2 and 22 ; whoever makes the proper use of prevenient, preparatory grace, is meant. **Is acceptable to him.** Viz. to become a Christian ; not, to be saved without Christ. For that was the case of Cornelius and his family and friends : they were to be admitted to the Christian Church, to a state where they could have forgiveness of sins and salvation ; not to be considered children of God in the state in which

they were, as not standing in need of Christ and baptism.—Ver. 36. **Unto the children of Israel.** To them in the first place the Messiah and the Gospel were sent (ii. 39). **Peace.** Comp. Luke ii. 14; John xiv. 27; Rom. v. 1. *Peace* in Hebrew means prosperity, happiness, welfare in general and in every respect. This peace was given man in and by creation, lost through the fall, and recovered by Christ. It presupposes, as its necessary basis, forgiveness of sins, and consists in all the blessed consequences of this forgiveness. The Gospel is nothing else than the *preaching of good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ*. It seems best to construe *by Jesus Christ* with *preaching*, so that Jesus Christ is the preacher of those good tidings. This is in accordance with grammar and makes good sense, presupposes, however, the obtaining of peace by and through Christ, since He could preach the good tidings of this peace only because He also acquired and obtained it; for no one else could do this. **He is Lord of all.** Hence He could acquire peace for all, and has obtained and intends it for all, not merely for the Jews or a select number; and hence also the Gospel is for all. (Comp. Rom. i. 16.)—Ver. 37. **That saying.** It seems best to us to regard this, with both the Authorized and Revised Versions, as an apposition to **the word** in the preceding verse, denoting also the Gospel.—Ver. 38. **Jesus of Nazareth.** The sum and substance of that *word* and *saying*, the Gospel, as He is the principal preacher, yea, author of it. **Anointed him,** etc. Comp. Matt. iii. 13 sqq. That made Him the Messiah, i. e. the Anointed One, or the Christ, namely, the conferring of the Holy Spirit beyond measure. (Comp. Psalm xlv. 7.) **With the Holy Ghost and with power.** The *power* conferred by the Holy Ghost is here mentioned especially because *it* was necessary for the works of Christ mentioned immediately after-

wards; as in other passages other special gifts of the Holy Ghost are mentioned because *they* were required by the circumstances. (Comp. vi. 3 ; xi. 24 ; xiii. 52 ; Luke i. 35.) **Healing all**, etc. Comp. Matt. xii. 28 sq. **For God was with him**. If this was the cause and source of His wonderful works, they also prove that God was with Him in a special sense, namely, in such a sense that He is Lord of all (36), and could truly say, I and the Father are one (John x. 30).—Ver. 39. **We**. Emphatic. Since the apostles were eye and ear witnesses of all this, they could not but believe it themselves and urge others to believe. Their faith and preaching had a sure foundation, their own incontrovertible experience. **Country**. Opposed to the capital, Jerusalem. **Whom also**. Besides persecuting Him in other ways. **Hanging him on a tree**. Comp. Matt. xxvii. 22 ; Acts v. 30.—Ver. 40. **Gave**. Permitted, granted, caused. The manifestations and revelations of Christ after His glorious resurrection were a gift and privilege granted to the apostles and through them to the whole Church, incontrovertibly proving His resurrection, and hence also His Messiahship.—Ver. 41. **Not . . . but**. In accordance with the usual way and procedure of God, not working more miracles than is necessary, manifesting Himself to some men that are to be His witnesses unto others. **Chosen before**. Several years before the resurrection took place (Matt. x. 1 sqq.), and, as God does not do anything in time which He has not determined to do in eternity, already in eternity. **Did eat and drink**. The most unmistakable proof.—Ver. 42. **Charged**. Commanded, ordered. **The people**. To whom Christ was promised and sent in the first place. (Comp. 41.) **Testify**. Affirm and state solemnly.—Ver. 43. **All the prophets**. Comp. iii. 24. **Through his name**. By His manifesting Himself

as the Messiah ; this is the *objective cause* of salvation. **Believeth on him.** Puts his trust in Him and His redemptive work ; the *subjective means*, and divinely-appointed *order*. **Every one.** No exception ; the way to heaven is open to every man.—Ver. 44. **Heard.** In the proper way, not resisting the operation of the Holy Ghost wilfully and obstinately. (Comp. Luke xi. 28.)—Ver. 45. **On the Gentiles also.** Not merely on those that formerly had been Jews.—Ver. 46. **For.** This was the manifestation and proof of that pouring-out which in itself was invisible and inaudible. (Comp. xix. 6.) **Answered.** Comp. v. 8.—Ver. 47. **Forbid.** Prevent, hinder ; the water, so to say, offers itself : it would seem to be a matter of course that these are admitted to baptism without any further condition and waiting. **As well as we.** And hence are, in every essential point, on a level with us Christians that were formerly Jews. Whom the Holy Ghost treats as our equals we must recognize as such, and therefore admit them to baptism.—Ver. 48. **Com-manded.** Did not baptize them himself ; his companions, no doubt, did this. The preaching of the Word, not baptism, was the principal office of the apostles, as of Christ Himself, since the former, and not the latter, is the absolutely necessary means of grace with adults and requires special gifts, especially in the founding of the Church. (Comp. 1 Cor. i. 17 ; John iv. 1 sq.) **In the name of Jesus Christ.** Comp. ii. 38. **Tarry certain days.** Stay yet some days. It is considered a matter of course by the Evangelist that Peter did so, there being no special cause to prevent him.

## CHAPTER XI.

### (A.) PETER'S APOLOGETIC ACCOUNT OF THE CONVERSION AND BAPTISM OF CORNELIUS.

11-18. Now the apostles and the brethren that were in Judæa heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. But Peter began, and expounded *the matter* unto them in order, saying, I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even unto me: upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw the four-footed beasts of the earth and wild beasts and creeping things and fowls of the heaven. And I heard also a voice saying unto me, Rise, Peter; kill and eat. But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath ever entered my mouth. But a voice answered the second time out of heaven, What God hath cleansed, make not thou common. And this was done thrice: and all were drawn up again into heaven. And behold, forthwith three men stood before the house in which we were, having been sent from Cæsarea unto me. And the Spirit bade me go with them, making no distinction. And these six brethren also accompanied me; and we entered into the man's house: and he told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying, Send to Joppa, and fetch Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall speak unto thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house. And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, even as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. If then God gave unto them the like gift as *he did* also unto us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I, that I could withstand God? And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life.

The news of the reception of Cornelius, his friends, and

his family into the Church without previous circumcision spread rapidly throughout Judæa and became known to all the Christians there (1). And when some time afterwards Peter came to Jerusalem, those Christians who formerly had been Jews and still entertained Jewish notions, disputed with him concerning the correctness of his conduct in being so intimate with men who were not circumcised (2 sq.). But Peter by the simple telling of the story, adding in the independent, vivid manner of an eye and ear witness some details to the record given in the preceding chapter, proved to them that he could not have acted otherwise without open disobedience to God Himself, who by a singular vision (5-10; comp. x. 10-16), by the direct command of the Holy Ghost (11 sq.; comp. x. 17-20), and by what Peter heard and saw in the house of Cornelius (13-15; comp. x. 30-46), had evidently shown that also these Gentiles were to have part in the baptism with the Holy Ghost that had been promised and granted to the apostles in the first place (16); and that therefore the reception into the Church by the ordinary means of baptism with water could not be denied to them who in everything essential had by God Himself been placed on a level with the first Christians of Jewish descent (17). Having heard this, the, at first dissatisfied, Christians could not but give up their opposition to the course taken by Peter, and even praise God who evidently, though contrary to their expectation, had wrought also in heathen that change of heart that is the only and indispensable way to life eternal (18).

Ver. 1. **The Gentiles also.** And without first becoming Jews through circumcision; for that the Gospel and faith and salvation were intended also for the Gentiles, they knew full well. (Comp. Matt. xxviii. 19; Acts i. 8; ii. 39; iii. 25 sq.)—Ver. 2. **Peter.** Together with his six



companions (12; comp. x. 23). **Of the circumcision.** Comp. x. 45.—Ver. 3. **Wentest in**, etc. Comp. x. 23, 28, 48. They would not have objected to what Peter had done if he had also made Cornelius and the others submit to circumcision and thereby to the ceremonial law.—Ver. 4. **Began, and expounded.** This shows the importance of the matter as also of Peter's apology. **In order.** In the way and order in which the different events had happened.—Ver. 5. **I.** Emphatic, referring to his own personal experience. **It came even unto me.** So that I could look in.—Ver. 6. **Fastened mine eyes.** Wondering what it might be. **Considered.** Fixed my mind upon it. **And saw**, etc. The result of the fastening his eyes and the considering. **Wild beasts.** Mentioned here especially, but included in *all manner of fourfooted beasts*, x. 12.—Ver. 11. **We were.** Perhaps also those six companions of whom he speaks in the next verse.—Ver. 12. **Making no distinction.** Viz. between Jews and Gentiles, as going with, and to, the one class and refusing to do so with regard to the other. *Doubting nothing*, x. 20, viz. as to doing what God had commanded him to do and still would command him, refers to the same thing; for God wanted him to make no distinction in the above sense. **These six brethren.** Present also at Jerusalem as Peter's witnesses.—Ver. 13. **The angel.** Mentioned already x. 3, 22; hence the definite article designating him as already known.—Ver. 14. **Whereby.** Lit. *wherein*; the Gospel contains all that is necessary unto salvation, the divine truth and grace that must be appropriated by faith, and the divine power to work and preserve this faith. (Comp. Rom. i. 16; x. 17.)—Ver. 15. **Began.** Comp. x. 44. **In the beginning.** Comp. ii. 1 sqq.—Ver. 16. **The word of the Lord.** Comp. i. 5. **Ye.** Emphatic, in contrast with those that were baptized by John.—

Ver. 17. **When we believed.** Lit. *had become believers.* Faith was the only condition and prerequisite, and also the absolutely necessary one; hence that gift of the Holy Ghost (x. 45 sq.) proved that Cornelius and the others had true faith and therefore were entitled to baptism, since faith is also the only condition of this. **Who was I,** etc. Really two interrogative sentences blended into one, literally, *Who was I, able to prevent God?* That is, Who was I over against God, I, a mere sinful creature? Was I able to hinder God when He so unmistakably expressed His will that these men should be granted baptism without laying upon them any further condition? —Ver. 18. **Held their peace.** Were silent, did not say anything, viz. in opposition to Peter. **Glorified.** Showing the real change they had undergone in this direction. **Then.** According to what we have heard from reliable witnesses. Without this testimony they would not have believed it. **To the Gentiles also.** Namely, without their being compelled to become Jews.

## (B.) THE SPREADING OF THE GOSPEL TO THE NORTH OF PALESTINE.

19-30. They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phœnicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only to Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord. And the report concerning them came to the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas as far as Antioch: who, when he was come, and had seen the grace of God, was glad; and he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord: for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. And he went forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul: and when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that even for a whole year they

were gathered together with the church, and taught much people; and that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

Now in these days there came down prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be a great famine over all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius. And the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judæa: which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

God, who governs everything for the good of His Church, caused the dispersion of the Christians resulting from the persecution that followed the murder of Stephen to be instrumental in spreading the Gospel even outside of Palestine, namely, into countries to the north of it, though, owing to Jewish prejudices that still clung to those dispersed disciples, the Gospel as a rule was as yet preached to the Jews only (19). Some of those disciples, however, men raised in heathen countries, and therefore, perhaps, not so exclusive as were the natives of Palestine, came to Antioch, the metropolis of northern Syria, and there preached also to the heathen population (20). And their Lord manifestly approved of their course, bringing many to faith in Christ by their instrumentality (21). When these news reached the mother Church at Jerusalem, Barnabas was sent to investigate the matter (22). Seeing the manifest work of divine grace he could but rejoice and exhort the new Christians to cling to their Saviour with firm and sincere determination (23). Thus, in the true light, he viewed and judged this matter because he was a man of a noble and friendly disposition, and at the same time had received the gifts of the Holy Ghost, especially faith, in a full measure; and the result was that a large number of people was added to the Church (24). Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to get Saul to help him in gathering the rich harvest of their common Lord;

and Saul recognized in this the call of God and went with his friend (25). Thus the two had the joy of working together in that congregation for even a whole year; and here, where through their instrumentality so many Gentiles entered the Church, the disciples of Christ were first called Christians, that is, adherents or followers of Christ (26).—At this time prophets, that is, inspired men commissioned by God Himself to declare His counsel and will, whether with regard to the future or otherwise, came to Antioch (27), and one of them publicly announced a great famine, which also, as history tells us, came during the reign of emperor Claudius (A. D. 41-54), and especially in the year 44 fell upon Palestine (28). In consequence of this announcement the Christians at Antioch, being, as a rule, in better circumstances, made up a collection for the comparatively poorer fellow-believers in Judæa, each one contributing according to his ability (29), and sent it by Barnabas and Saul to the leaders of the congregations in Judæa for distribution (30).

Ver. 19. **They therefore that were scattered abroad.** Thus Luke takes up again, and in the same words, the description of what was the result of the murder of Stephen (viii. 4 sq.), adding a new point. **To none.** The Greek word used here intimates that, according to what is related in the first part of this chapter, we might expect something else (the *subjective* negation: *do not think* that they preached to any but Jews).—Ver. 20. **Cyprus.** Comp. iv. 36. **Cyrene.** Comp. ii. 10; vi. 9. **Antioch.** First the capital of the Greek kings of Syria, then of the Roman governors of the province bearing the same name, founded in the year 300 B. C., by king Seleucus Nicator, or Nicanor, and named in honor of his father, king Antiochus. Situated in the great and fertile plain of the river Orontes, it became a city of great extent

and beauty. Many Jews lived there. It was also a prominent seat of Hellenistic culture, as afterwards of a Christian bishop and a theological school. Now, called Antakia, it is of little importance, filling only about one-fifth of the ample space still enclosed by the well-preserved walls, and having among its Mohammedan inhabitants only a few Christians. **Greeks.** This reading, it seems, must be the true one, since the other, also supported by important manuscripts, viz. *Hellenists*, or Greek Jews (comp. vi. 1), does not seem to fit here at all, as it forms no direct contrast to *Jews* in the preceding verse, and such a contrast is expected here. The Jews of Phœnicia, Cyprus, and Antioch doubtless with hardly any exception were Hellenists, using the Greek language in common life, not the Hebrew. Perhaps the reading *Hellenists* was by mistake adopted from ix. 29. If it were the true reading, the sense would be that these Hellenists formed, so to say, the bridge between the Jews using the Hebrew language, mainly found in Palestine, and the Gentiles with whom the Hellenists, because of their common language and abode, came into frequent contact. **Preaching the Lord Jesus.** Announcing the glad tidings that in Jesus of Nazareth the Saviour of the whole human race has come, redeeming men from sin, Satan, and condemnation. Here again we see that Jesus, His person and His work, is the sum and substance of the Gospel and of Christianity, not a sum or system of moral truths. (Comp. viii. 5.)—Ver. 21. **The hand of the Lord.** Comp. iv. 28. To bring man to believe in Christ requires divine power, though God does not make use of His irresistible omnipotence (Matt. xxiii. 37; Acts xiii. 46 sqq.). **And a great number**, etc. That was the consequence. **That believed.** Had come to believe; that is the only way to *turn unto the Lord*, away from

the service of sin to the service of Him who is our Creator and Redeemer and hence our Lord in a twofold sense.—Ver. 22. **Came to the ears.** Lit. *was heard* (being spoken) *into the ears.* **Barnabas.** A man well qualified for this important and somewhat delicate mission both by his descent and his peculiar gifts and standing in Jerusalem, having the confidence of all concerned. (Comp. iv. 36; ix. 27.) **As far as Antioch.** This place was further removed from Jerusalem than any other that so far could be mentioned as the seat of a congregation.—Ver. 23. **Was glad.** Not jealous, or at least doubtful how this was to be regarded. **That with purpose of heart,** etc. They had in faith come to Christ; now they were to stay with Him, cling to Him, not languidly or irresolutely, but with the determination of their very hearts.—Ver. 24. **A good man.** A man fit for a mission of this nature, noble-minded, impartial, kind and charitable. (Comp. Rom. v. 7.) **Full of the Holy Ghost.** Able to judge also in these spiritual matters, and ready to recognize the manifest will and hand of God even when contrary to his ideas and expectations. **And of faith.** It required especially *faith*, humble and truthful submission to the will of God. (Comp. x. 38.)—Ver. 25. **Tarsus.** Comp. ix. 30. **To seek for Saul.** Of whom Barnabas evidently had never lost sight, and whose rare gifts and zeal he appreciated.—Ver. 26. **Were gathered together.** Were united in common work. **In the church.** Is the better translation. **Christians.** This name, in all probability, was given them by their heathen fellow-citizens. The Jews would not have used the Greek equivalent of Messiah, viz. Christ, for giving a nickname to the followers of the hated and despised Jesus of Nazareth whom they had crucified because he claimed the name and dignity of the Messiah or Christ; and the Christians them-

selves never call themselves by this name in the New Testament, it being, where it occurs (here and Acts xxvi. 28; 1 Pet. iv. 16), a term of reproach used by their opponents. Very soon, however, the believers learned to regard it as a title of honor and used it themselves, glad to bear His name to whom they owed everything. The original form may be of Greek or Latin origin, probably the former, the Antiochians, who were fond of witicism and mockery and used the Greek language, being the authors of this nickname.—Ver. 27. **Came down.** Jerusalem was situated higher than Antioch; moreover, as the seat of the Old Testament sanctuary and of the mother church, it had a grandeur and height above all other places. Why these prophets came, who sent them, whether the Holy Ghost directly, or the church at Jerusalem, can only be a matter of conjecture. **Prophets.** The explanation given above is the only correct one. The word is the technical term for an *interpreter of divine will and word*, a man *through whom God speaks* and reveals His will and mysteries. A prophet knows the will and mysteries of God by immediate divine revelation, and communicates them to others. And this will and these mysteries have reference, directly or indirectly, to the salvation of mankind. Since in the Old Testament this salvation was future, prophecies as a rule had the form of predictions; but this is merely accidental, owing to the peculiar circumstances of those times. In the New Testament prophets as a rule spoke of the salvation already obtained, and by divine inspiration explained its meaning and import; only where they spoke of events that were still future their prophecies took the form of predictions. (Comp. 1 Cor. xiv. 1 sq.; xii. 28; Eph. iii. 5; iv. 11; 1 Thess. v. 20; 1 Tim. i. 18; iv. 14.)—Ver. 28. **By the Spirit.** He knew it and could foretell it only

because the Spirit had revealed it to him. Paul met him again a good many years later (xxi. 10 sq.). **The world.** Used also to denote the Roman Empire. **In the days of Claudius.** The whole reign of this emperor was notable for famine and dearth, one affliction of this sort following the other, though not in all countries at the same time.—Ver. 29. **According to his ability.** Lit. *according as each one was prosperous*, or, *had means*. **Relief.** Lit. *for service*, or *ministry*, that is to minister unto the wants, to relieve the wants. This was done before the famine came upon Judæa; to wait until it had come would not have required a special prophecy or prediction.—Ver. 30. **To the elders.** Called *presbyters* in the original, the word from which *priest* is derived. In other passages the same persons are called *bishops*, from the Greek *episkopos*, signifying *overseer*, or *superintendent*—the former name denoting their honor and dignity, the latter their duty and office. (Comp. xiv. 23; xv. 2, 6; xx. 17, 28; 1 Pet. v. 1;—Phil. i. 1; Tit. i. 5, 7.) Hence, originally, and by divine right, the bishop occupied no higher position and dignity in the Christian Church than the elder, the two titles, on the contrary, designating one and the same person and office, only from a different point of view. It has been surmised that after the first assistants of the apostles had been dispersed (comp. vi. 1 sqq.; viii. 1 sqq.), these presbyters or bishops were appointed to assist the apostles or to take their place when absent. The name *elders*, as the honorary title, was, no doubt, taken from the Jewish elders prominent in the whole history of the Old Testament as also at the time of Christ and the apostles. (Comp. Ex. iii. 16; Num. xi. 16; 1 Kings viii. 1, 3; 1 Macc. xii. 6; Luke vii. 3; xxii. 66; Acts iv. 5.) **Barnabas and Saul.** Barnabas was still the leader. Why are the *apostles* not mentioned? Some



say because they were absent, either on missionary tours, or on account of the persecution mentioned in the next chapter; others, because it was not necessary to mention them here, and some of these even identify this visit with that mentioned Gal. ii. 1 sqq.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE PERSECUTIONS AND THE END OF HEROD AGRIPPA I.

#### (A.) *Herod Agrippa's Persecutions* (A. D. 44).

1-17. Now about that time Herod the king put forth his hands to afflict certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. And *those* were the days of unleavened bread. And when he had taken him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to guard him; intending after the Passover to bring him forth to the people. Peter therefore was kept in the prison; but prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for him. And when Herod was about to bring him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and guards before the door kept the prison. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shined in the cell: and he smote Peter on the side, and awoke him, saying, Rise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And he did so. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out, and followed; and he wist not that it was true which was done by the angel, but thought he saw a vision. And when they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth into the city; which opened to them of its own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and straightway the angel departed from him. And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a truth, that the Lord hath sent forth his angel and delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. And when he had considered *the thing*, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together and were praying. And when he knocked at the door of the gate, a maid came to answer, named Rhoda. And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for joy, but ran in, and told that Peter stood before the gate. And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she confidently affirmed that it

was even so. And they said, It is his angel. But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened, they saw him, and were amazed. But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him forth out of the prison. And he said, Tell these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went to another place.

About the time when Barnabas and Saul were sent to Jerusalem to deliver the collection raised for the support of the poor brethren in Judæa (xi. 27 sqq.), a new persecution arose in this country. King Herod Agrippa I. undertook to maltreat some of the Christians, designing, as it would seem, especially the destruction of the apostles, the leaders of the Church, hoping that that would bring about at least the weakening, if not the ruin, of the whole Church (1). James, the son of Zebedee, he put to death and thus made him the first martyr among the apostles (2). As his actions in this regard evidently pleased the Jews, Agrippa then also seized Peter, the very foremost leader of the Church, and imprisoned him, having him strictly guarded, with the intention of publicly trying and sentencing him after the Easter festival that was being celebrated (3 sq.). As was natural, the congregation offered up fervent prayers for the release of their most prominent member (5). And this prayer was not in vain. The night before Peter was to be tried the precautions for preventing his escape were doubled (6). But no human measure can prevent God from delivering His Christians. Something similar to what had once before happened to Peter (v. 17 sqq.) took place: all at once an angel of God, surrounded by heavenly light, appeared in the dismal, gloomy prison, roused Peter from his calm, sound sleep, and, freeing him from his fetters, bade him hasten to get ready for following him (7 sq.). Peter did so, although, being awakened

so suddenly, he at first thought the heavenly appearance to be but a vision (9). Following his guide, he passed out of the prison and by his guards, and through the heavy iron gate that shut off the prison from the city and which was opened by divine power. Having been led by the angel through one street and thus being out of immediate danger, he suddenly found himself alone (10). Then he could not but see that what hitherto had seemed to him but a vision was a joyful reality, namely his delivery from Agrippa's murderous hands and the execution so eagerly expected by the Jews (11). When he had come to see this, he went to the house of a Christian sister where many fellow-believers had assembled to pray for his deliverance (12). The girl in charge of the gate, hearing Peter knock, first went to listen whether a friend or an enemy wanted to gain admittance (13); but when she had recognized the voice of Peter, she did not even think of opening the gate, but hastened to break the good tidings to the others (14). These, however, could so little believe her that they supposed her to be beside herself from excitement, and, when she persisted, thought it must be Peter's guardian angel who had assumed his form and voice (15). As Peter kept knocking, they at last admitted him, amazed to see him there himself (16). As he knew that God wanted him to flee from Jerusalem for a time, he hurriedly explained what had happened to him and requested them also to let the others know, and then withdrew to another place (17).

**Ver. 1. Herod.** Agrippa I., a son of Aristobulus, a nephew of Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee (Matt. ii. 22), and a grandson of Herod the Great, who by the favor of the emperor Claudius had become king over the whole territory formerly ruled by his grandfather (A. D. 42-44), an extravagant but shrewd prince. **Put forth his**

**hands.** Had hands laid on them, had them seized.—Ver. 2. **James.** Surnamed the older, in contradistinction to James the son of Alphæus (i. 13), one of the principal leaders of the Church, he and his brother John and Peter having been the most intimate disciples of Christ (Mark v. 37; Matt. xvii. 1 sqq.; xxvi. 37). This took place before Easter A.D. 44.—Ver. 3. **Peter.** Comp. i. 13. **The days of unleavened bread.** Popularly called the pass-over (Luke xxii. 1), though, strictly speaking, the former followed the latter (Lev. xxiii. 5 sq.; Num. xxviii. 16 sq.; comp. also Matt. xxvi. 2, 17).—Ver. 4. **Four quaternions of soldiers.** Four bands of four soldiers each, perhaps one band at a time being on duty in the four night watches. (Comp. Matt. xiv. 25; Mark xiii. 35.) **Bring him forth.** Lit. *lead him up*, viz. to the elevated place where the judgment seat was located. (Comp. John xix. 13).—Ver. 6. **Between two soldiers,** etc. Peter was chained to two soldiers instead of one (comp. xxiii. 18); the two other soldiers belonging to the band of four were stationed outside, before the prison door, at a short distance from each other. (Comp. 10.) **Kept.** Watched, guarded.—Ver. 7. **Behold.** Something unexpected. **Stood by him.** All at once. **Cell.** Better, *prison* (A. V.). **Smote.** So soundly Peter was asleep, having a good conscience and firm confidence in God's love and care. **His chains fell.** Miraculously. **Off from his hands.** Lit. *out of*, etc., the chains having been twisted around and into the hands.—Ver. 8. **Gird thyself.** Taking up the long and flowing gown and fastening it with a girdle so that it did not hinder in rapid walking. **Garment.** A sort of cloak or shawl.—Ver. 9. **Wist.** Knew. **By.** *Through* is the better rendering, the angel being simply the instrument of God. **A vision.** Signifying and symbolizing something (comp. x. 9 sqq.), and in so far also

something real, being wrought by God; but not an actual *external* occurrence.—Ver. 10. **The first and second ward.** Or watch. (Comp. 6.) On these two guards, as on their two comrades inside, no doubt a miraculous sleep had fallen.—Ver. 11. **Was come to himself.** Was fully conscious of his situation and the reality of his deliverance. (Comp. 9.)—Ver. 12. **Considered.** Better, *perceived, comprehended, understood.* **Mary.** A near relative of Barnabas (Col. iv. 10). **Mark.** The intimate disciple of Peter (1 Pet. v. 13) and author of the second Gospel. (Comp. also ver. 25; xiii. 5; xv. 37 sqq.)—Ver. 13. **A maid,** etc. Comp John xviii. 16. The **gate** was no doubt the portal, or porch, or gateway, that led from the street into the inner court. (Comp. Matt. xxvi. 71.) **Answer.** Better, *hearken, or listen.*—Ver. 15. **His angel.** His guardian angel, a supposition in conformity with the then prevalent belief of the Jews, as also later of many Christians, some of the foremost fathers of the Church included (e. g. Basil and Chrysostom); though Christ (Matt. xviii. 10), as also the Holy Scriptures in general (e. g. Psalm xxxiv. 7; xci. 11; Heb. i. 14), speaks only of the common service that the holy angels render to the children of God, and not of a special guardian angel for every Christian.—Ver. 16. **When they had opened.** Having come out of the room where they were assembled, curious and eager to see what it was.—Ver. 17. **Hold their peace.** Be silent and quiet. **James.** “The Lord’s brother” (Gal. i. 19; Acts. i. 14; xv. 13), from now on the principal leader of the Church in Judæa. Hence he is mentioned especially and in the first place. **The brethren.** That were not present. **He departed,** etc., in conformity with Christ’s command Matt. x. 23. (Comp. Acts viii. 1.) **Went to another place.** Preaching, probably, the Gospel to those to whom afterwards he wrote

his epistles. (Comp. 1 Pet. i. 1; v. 13.) Because this persecution, as it seems, was aimed especially at the apostles, they could flee, leaving the Church in the care of others, though under different circumstances they acted differently. (Comp. viii. 1.)

(B.) *Agrippa's End.*

18-25. Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter. And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the guards, and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judæa to Cæsarea, and tarried there.

Now he was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: and they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, they asked for peace, because their country was fed from the king's country. And upon a set day Herod arrayed himself in royal apparel, and sat on the throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people shouted, *saying*, The voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately an angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.

But the word of God grew and multiplied.

And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministration, taking with them John whose surname was Mark.

The deliverance of Peter, having, as it would seem, taken place during the last watch of the night (comp. 4), was not found out till daybreak, and then filled the soldiers concerned with the greatest dismay, as, according to the usages of those times, they had to fear a severe punishment, not being able to explain satisfactorily the escape of their prisoner (18). And their fears were only too well founded, as Agrippa, after a vain search for Peter, tried them either for culpable neglect of duty or perhaps even complicity with the escaped prisoner, and, since they could not clear themselves, made them suffer the usual punishment for an offence of this kind. Then he went to Cæsarea and there took his abode for some

time (19). As he was very angry at the principal cities of Phœnicia, he was approached by their delegates through the intervention of his chief chamberlain, they being anxious to remain at peace with him, since their territory was dependent on his with regard to a great deal of their commerce (20). On an appointed day Agrippa, clad in a superb robe, publicly addressed those delegates, and in his self-conceit accepted the blasphemous plaudits of the audience that pretended to see in him a superhuman being (21 sq.). As a punishment for this arrogance he was immediately smitten with a violent pain in his bowels, the forerunner of that loathsome disease that within a few days brought on his end (23). Thus the persecutor of the Church had died a sudden and frightful death; but the Church itself went on in its victorious course, the Gospel spreading everywhere and gaining more and more believers (24); and Barnabas and Saul, returning from Jerusalem after they had delivered the collection and thus performed the duties of their present office, took with them as their assistant the young cousin of the former (25).

Ver. 18. **As soon as it was day.** Hence the watch had not been changed, either because the deliverance had taken place during the last watch, or because the miraculous sleep of the soldiers had lasted longer than a watch. **Stir.** Viz. of mind, commotion, dismay. **Among the soldiers.** That formed the four bands (4); they all feared for the lives of the four comrades that had been in charge of the prisoner last. **What was become of Peter?** This question, which they could not answer, was the cause of their dismay.—Ver. 19. **The guards.** No doubt, the four soldiers concerned in the next place; to punish also the other three bands would have been extreme cruelty, except in case of proved conspiracy.



**Cæsarea.** Comp. x. 1 ; viii. 40. This city was now the capital of Herod, he ruling also over the territory that since the death of Archelaus had been governed by Roman procurators. (Comp. 1 ; Matt. ii. 22.) The Jewish historian Josephus, to whom we owe some explanatory details of these occurrences, tells us that Herod desired to be present at games to be celebrated at Cæsarea in honor of emperor Claudius.—Ver 20. **Blastus** had in some way or other been gained over to the interests of the Phœnicians. He was, to judge by his name, a Greek or Roman, and by virtue of his intimate relation to the king had great influence with him. The cause of the difficulty was very likely commercial rivalry between those cities and Cæsarea. **Was fed.** Buying Palestinian products, especially grain, and selling again timber, articles of luxury, and so on. (Comp. 1 Kings v. 8-10 ; Ez. xxvii. 17.) “The narrow strip of Phœnician territory was of course utterly inadequate to furnish corn, oil, and other necessities for the important maritime cities of Tyre and Sidon. From very early times the neighboring fertile regions were in the habit of furnishing supplies for the markets of Tyre. Herod, no doubt, in his anger forbade all intercommunication and traffic between Israel and the Phœnician cities.” (*Pop. Comm.*)—Ver. 21. **Upon a set day.** According to Josephus, the second day of the games. “The festival was kept in the month of August in the year 44 : the king had appointed the second day of the festival to receive the Tyrian ambassadors, and to convey to them his gracious assurance of favor and pardon. Josephus, whose graphic account of the incident well supplements the brief, stern summary of the ‘Acts,’ tells us that on that morning of the 2d August the king entered the vast, crowded theatre of Cæsarea, clothed in a magnificent dress of silver tissue ; the sun’s rays fell on

the royal robes of silver, and the eyes of the beholder were dazzled with the brightness which surrounded the monarch. Herod then from his throne spoke to the assembled multitude, the majority of whom were idolaters, —Cæsarea was almost exclusively a Gentile city. Courtly voices among the crowd cried aloud that the monarch who stood before them in all his magnificence was no man, but a god; and the crowd, dazzled with the brilliancy of his appearance, took up the shout, saying, 'It is the voice of a god and not of a man;' and the king, whose pride had been that he belonged to the idol-aboring Hebrew people, was well pleased with the impious homage. While listening approvingly to this blasphemous flattery, the king suddenly looked up and saw an owl sitting on a rope above his head, and immediately understood that the bird was the messenger to him of evil tidings (an old prediction he had heard at Rome had warned him that the appearance of this bird would betoken grave evil to him). He fell into a deep melancholy, and very soon was seized with agonizing pain in his bowels: he then said to the audience, 'I whom you called a god am commanded now to depart this life;' and the pain becoming more violent, he was carried into his palace, where he lingered in extreme suffering for five days and then expired." (*Pop. Comm.*) **Made an oration unto them.** Unto the ambassadors, namely, in the first place.—Ver. 23. **He was eaten of worms.** Josephus simply speaks of violent and torturing pains. The more accurate description given by the author of Acts is also a proof that Luke the physician was this author. "It has been suggested that this fearful malady is especially reserved by God for princes who have cruelly misused their power over their subjects. The instances we possess of victims to this disease are few in number:—Anti-

ochus Epiphanes, who bitterly persecuted the Jews; Pheretima, Queen of Cyrene, celebrated for her cruelty; C. L. Herminianus, Roman governor of Cappadocia, who cruelly persecuted the Christians (see *Tertul. ad Scapulam*); and the Emperor Galerius, the last persecutor of the Church (EUSEBIUS). To this list Niebuhr adds the name of Philip II." (*Pop. Comm.*) In this case this terrible disease is expressly described as a special punishment because Herod had arrogated to himself the glory due to God. (Comp. 2 Macc. ix. 5-9.)—Ver. 25. **From Jerusalem.** Other manuscripts read, *to Jerusalem*, and this can, in the Greek original, be construed with the next clause, *When they had fulfilled their ministration to Jerusalem*, or *with regard to Jerusalem*. If this latter reading be correct, the apostles may not have been at all in Jerusalem, as also xi. 30 this is not stated; and hence there would not even be an apparent contradiction between the Acts and Gal. ii. 1, where Paul does not mention this journey, yea, according to the context, seems to deny that he had been at Jerusalem again between the journey mentioned in Gal. i. 18 and that spoken of in ii. 1. But even if he and Barnabas were there this time, Paul might pass it by in Gal. ii. 1 because, in accordance with their mission at that time, their stay there was a very brief one, and hence could have no bearing on the points discussed in Gal. i. and ii. (Comp. xxii. 17; xi. 30.)

### III.—THE FIRST MISSIONARY TOUR OF PAUL—

A. D. 46–50 (Chs. XIII. and XIV.).

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#### CHAPTER XIII.

##### (A.) PAUL'S MISSIONARY ACTIVITY AT CYPRUS.

1–12. Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was *there*, prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Symeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, went down to Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. And when they were at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John as their attendant. And when they had gone through the whole island unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-Jesus; which was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of understanding. The same called unto him Barnabas and Saul, and sought to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn aside the proconsul from the faith. But Saul, who is also *called* Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, fastened his eyes on him, and said, O full of all guile and all villany, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the proconsul, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

With this chapter *the second part of the Acts* begins,

treating especially of *the missionary activity of Paul* (chapters xiii.-xxviii.). The first starting-point and centre of this activity was Antioch, where a flourishing congregation existed, led by a number of prophets and other teachers (1). Whilst these men were attending to the duties of their divine office, strictly abstaining from all that could be a hindrance to them, the Holy Ghost made known His will that from now on Barnabas and Saul were to enter upon the special work to which first of all Saul, and then, as his companion, also Barnabas had been called, namely, that of preaching the Gospel in heathen countries (2). In obedience to this divine command they were solemnly consecrated for their important office (3). Embarking at Seleucia, the harbor west of Antioch, they first went to Cyprus, the home of Barnabas (4), landed at Salamis on the eastern coast, and immediately began preaching the Gospel to the Jews, to whom Christ had been sent in the first place, young Mark being their assistant in this (5). Passing through the island, they came to Paphos on the western coast, the residence of the Roman governor or proconsul, and found there a Jewish magician, falsely calling himself a prophet (6). As the proconsul was a man of intelligence also in religious matters, he could just as little be satisfied with the pretended wisdom and power of Bar-Jesus as with his former religion, and hence embraced the opportunity of hearing the newly-arrived heralds of the Gospel, anxious to see whether there he could find what his soul longed for, rest and peace (7). And now the magician tried to keep the proconsul from believing in Christ (8). But Saul, who from now on, as apostle of the Gentiles, bears the Roman name Paul, in the power of the Holy Spirit severely rebuked him for his cunning and mischievous conduct in persistently trying to hinder the gracious

counsel of God by perverting His saving Word, and thus proving himself a child of Satan and an enemy of all that is truly right and good (9 sq.). At the same time he announced to him a severe punishment of God in the form of temporary blindness, which came upon him immediately (11). This made such an impression upon the proconsul that he believed the preaching that so evidently was connected with the power of God and hence could not but be of divine origin (12).

Ver. 1. **Antioch.** Comp. xi. 20. **Prophets.** Comp. xi. 27. **Teachers.** Not inspired. (Comp. 1 Cor. xii. 28 sq.; Eph. iv. 11.) According to the conjunctions used in the original Greek the three first mentioned, Barnabas, Symeon, and Lucius, form one group, no doubt that of the prophets; the other two, Manaen and Saul, another group, that of the teachers. Of course those that were at one time simply teachers could at some other time be also prophets, as was the case with Paul. (Comp. Gal. ii. 2; 2 Cor. xii. 1 sqq.) Of Symeon and Lucius we know nothing except what is stated here; the same is the case with Manaen, then already an aged Christian and perhaps of noble descent, having been raised or educated together with a son of Herod the Great. (Comp. Matt. ii. 22.)—Ver. 2. **As they ministered.** Viz. those five men; this is the explanation most in conformity with the context and the Greek word for *ministered*, which as a rule denotes service in a public office. Others understand the whole *church* at Antioch being gathered for public worship. **The Holy Ghost said.** No doubt through one of the prophets. **Separate.** From those that are working at Antioch. **Me.** For my service. **Barnabas.** Here still mentioned first as the oldest one in conversion and office. **Called.** Saul directly and expressly (ix. 15); Barnabas perhaps not in the same way, but at least in the

intention and decree of God.—Ver. 3. **Then.** In a special gathering of the congregation the two missionaries were consecrated to their office. The *fasting* was a preparation for this solemn act, especially for the prayer, subduing the flesh and thus removing obstacles to heartfelt devotion. Concerning *prayer* and *laying on of hands* comp. vi. 6. Here we have the prototype of ecclesiastical ordination, the prophets and teachers officiating and the congregation consenting and witnessing. Of an *election* we cannot speak here, since the Holy Ghost had appointed the two missionaries immediately and directly. Thus ordination is an apostolic rite and usage, it being almost a matter of course that something like it should take place on such an occasion ; but still there is no commandment or divine institution with regard to it. Hence, fasting and laying on of hands can be omitted, as the former now generally is ; but to suppose that when a person is publicly declared to enter the holy ministry no prayer, especially in his behalf, would be offered, is preposterous. Ordination, therefore, in its essence is nothing but the natural manifestation of Christian spirit on a special, highly important, occasion, needing no special commandment and institution.—Ver. 4. **By the Holy Ghost.** What God does through men He does as really Himself as if He did it without any mediation ; this is a consolation for those that are called through men. **Cyprus.** Comp. iv. 36. They first went to a place where they could expect to find people willing to listen at least to what they had to say, namely, to countrymen of Barnabas. A divine call does not render unnecessary human prudence and foresight.—Ver. 5. **In the synagogues of the Jews.** Where they could expect to find first of all men understanding their preaching and willing to listen to it. It was only natural to begin with

the Jews and then go to the Gentiles. **John.** xii. 12. **Attendant.** Official servant, not their equal in office. Perhaps, besides other services, he had to attend also to baptism. (Comp. x. 48; 1 Cor. i. 14.)—Ver. 6. **Sorcerer.** Comp. viii. 9. **Bar-Jesus.** That is, Son of Jesus, or Joshua. (Comp. Matt. i. 1, 21.)—Ver. 7. **A man of understanding.** Such he proved himself to be already by not being satisfied with his heathen religion and trying what Bar-Jesus could do for him. **Sought.** Diligently, concernedly; not simply out of curiosity. **The word of God.** What the two missionaries preached was the word, the revelation, of the true God; this the proconsul did not know at first, but wanted to find out whether it was.—Ver. 8. **Elymas.** The Arabic word for *the wise one*, or, *the magician*. This title the sorcerer had perhaps assumed to appear as the possessor of old Arabian wisdom. **His name.** Viz. Elymas. **Turn aside.** From the right path, pervert. **From the faith.** So that he should not come to have that faith kindled and strengthened in him which alone can save a man, viz. faith in the divine Redeemer.—Ver. 9. **Paul.** It is most probable that Saul, being even a Roman citizen by birth (xxii. 25 sqq.), bore the Roman name *Paul* from his youth, just as John bore the Roman name *Mark* (xii. 12; comp. also i. 23); and that from now on, working among the heathen, he used it exclusively, as we find it in all his Epistles and in the remaining chapters of the Acts. Luke may mention it first in this connection because of the conversion of another Paul. **Filled with the Holy Ghost.** Over against an instrument of the evil spirit. The more difficult and important the circumstances, the greater the wisdom and power that God gives to His children through the Holy Ghost. (Comp. iv. 8, 31; vii. 55; xiii. 52.) **Fastened his eyes on him.** Sternly and as one that, as a servant



of the true God, had authority over him. From now on Paul appears as the principal person, overshadowing even Barnabas. (Comp. 2.)—Ver. 10. **Gulle.** Deceit, craft. **Villany.** Unscrupulousness, cunning, mischief. **Son of the devil.** A man whose moral nature and condition is owing to the influence of Satan; a woful contrast to his beautiful name Bar-Jesus, *Son of one who is devoted to the Lord the Saviour.* (Comp. 6; comp. also John viii. 44.) **Righteousness.** Comp. x. 35. The proconsul was a man in some respects similar to Cornelius, following the light given him; and Elymas tried to hinder him, and also thereby proved himself an enemy of all that is right. **Pervert the right ways of the Lord.** Give a wrong direction to what God is doing, hinder and render futile His measures, for bringing a man on the right way to heaven and to the right goal. **The Lord.** The God of salvation.—Ver. 11. **The hand of the Lord.** The omnipotent power of God who protects His own and punishes those that withstand His gracious counsels for the salvation of men. (Comp. xi. 21; Heb. x. 31.) **Not seeing the sun for a season.** Emphasizes the blindness. **For a season.** Perhaps until he gave up his wilful resistance; at least the punishment was to lead him to repentance as well as to prove to the proconsul the divine character of the missionaries' preaching. "We are not to suppose that the apostles possessed the power of working miracles at pleasure, but only when they felt a divine impulse urging them to perform one. Paul struck Elymas with blindness because he felt inspired to work that miracle; but he could not cure Epaphroditus of his sickness, or remove from himself the thorn in the flesh. The miraculous power with which he was invested was not under his own control, but under the control and direction of Him who bestowed that power." (GLOAG, cited in *Pop. Comm.*)

**A mist.** Dimness, at first; then **darkness.** Though the punishment came forthwith, it increased gradually.

(B.) PAUL'S MISSIONARY ACTIVITY AT ANTIOCH IN PISIDIA.

13-52. Now Paul and his company set sail from Paphos, and came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departed from them and returned to Jerusalem. But they, passing through from Perga, came to Antioch of Pisidia; and they went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. And Paul stood up, and beckoning with the hand said,

Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, hearken. The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they sojourned in the land of Egypt, and with a high arm led he them forth out of it. And for about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness. And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave *them* their land for an inheritance, for about four hundred and fifty years: and after these things he gave *them* judges until Samuel the prophet. And afterward they asked for a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for the space of forty years. And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king; to whom also he bare witness, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who shall do all my will. Of this man's seed hath God according to promise brought unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus; when John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John was fulfilling his course, he said, What suppose ye that I am? I am not *he*. But behold, there cometh one after me, the shoes of whose feet I am not worthy to unloose. Brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and those among you that fear God, to us is the word of this salvation sent forth. For they that dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath, fulfilled *them* by condemning *him*. And though they found no cause of death *in him*, yet asked they of Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all things that were written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead; and he was seen for many days of them that came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses unto the people. And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers, how that God hath fulfilled the same unto our children, in that he raised up Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day

have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he hath spoken on this wise, I will give you the holy and sure *blessings* of David. Because he saith also in another *psalm*, Thou wilt not give thy Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had in his own generation served the counsel of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption : but he whom God raised up saw no corruption. Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins : and by him every one that believeth is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest that come upon *you*, which is spoken in the prophets ;

Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish ;

For I work a work in your days,

A work which ye shall in no wise believe, if one declare it unto you.

And as they went out, they besought that these words might be spoken to them the next sabbath. Now when the synagogue broke up, many of the Jews and of the devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas : who, speaking to them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.

And the next sabbath almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with jealousy, and contradicted the things which were spoken by Paul, and blasphemed. And Paul and Barnabas spake out boldly, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*,

I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles,

That thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth.

And as the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of God : and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was spread abroad throughout all the region. But the Jews urged on the devout women of honourable estate, and the chief men of the city, and stirred up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and cast them out of their borders. But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost.

From Paphos, on the western coast of Cyprus, Paul and his company set sail for the southeastern coast of Asia Minor, and came to Perga, an inland city of Pamphylia. Here Mark left them, perhaps because he had become discouraged by the many obstacles in their way

(13). The others, passing through the country in a northerly direction, came to Antioch in Pisidia, and on the sabbath day went into the synagogue of the place (14). After the appointed portions of the Law and the Prophets had been read, the officers of the synagogue in a friendly manner invited the newly-arrived teachers to address the congregation if they felt moved to do so (15). Thereupon Paul requested the assembly to listen to what he had to say to them as members of the people of the covenant, or at least proselytes of the gate (16). He then reminded them of the divinely-governed history of their people: how God chose their fathers, made their descendants a great and renowned people in Egypt, and brought them out of this country by extraordinary manifestations of His omnipotence (17); how for forty years He cared for them like a father in the wilderness, notwithstanding their frequent disobedience (18), and gave them for an inheritance the country promised to them, after having destroyed its wicked and impenitent inhabitants (19); how afterwards He gave them judges and then, upon their request, kings, first Saul, and when he, because of his disobedience to the Supreme Ruler, had to be removed, David, who truly could be called a man after the heart of God, since he, as a rule, was careful to obey His will (20-22). Then Paul goes on to show that, in strict accordance with His promise, God has made Jesus of Nazareth the Saviour of His people, He, and none other, being the promised Seed of David (23), for whom John the Baptist, according to divine appointment, prepared the way (24), unmistakably pointing to Him as the Messiah, whose forerunner he simply was (25). And now Paul in a loving, winning manner again addressed his two classes of hearers, and tells them they are having an opportunity offered them at this very

time of becoming partakers of the redemption wrought by the divinely-sent Saviour (26). Nor ought the sad fact that the inhabitants of the Jewish capital, led by their perverse rulers, delivered Him to the Gentiles to be put to death as one of the greatest culprits, to deter them from gladly receiving His Gospel message; for this was done, in the first place, in culpable ignorance, by not paying proper attention to the divine prophecies that were continually read in the religious gatherings of the people, and that predicted all that Jesus did and all that He suffered, so that by His very sufferings and death they were fulfilled (27); and, in the second place, it was done notwithstanding the manifest innocence of Christ (28). Thus His sufferings and death, far from disproving His claim of being the promised Messiah, rather proved it. Moreover, after all these predicted sufferings and His manifest death God raised Him from the dead, thus proclaiming Him to be what He had always claimed to be, the Son of God and the promised Redeemer (29 sq.). And that in very truth He was raised from the dead is proved by the trustworthy testimony of His constant companions to whom He showed Himself during several days, and who were then proclaiming the blessed news among the Jews (31); the same news that Paul and his companions were now preaching to their hearers, namely, the complete fulfilment of all the glorious promises given to the Patriarchs (32), this fulfilment being made complete by the resurrection of Christ, by which, according to prophecy, God has declared the eternal Sonship of Jesus (33). And He has been raised to die no more—again a manifest fulfilment of a Messianic prophecy, namely, of the consolation given to the repentant captives at Babylon that the gracious promises vouchsafed to David would be fulfilled without

any fail, an important part of which promises was the *eternal* rule of his Seed (34); wherefore also in another prophecy God through David promised that, notwithstanding the death and burial of Christ, His body, being that of the Son of God, should not decay (35). David, indeed, having performed the office given him by God, has met with the common fate of men, dying and decaying in the grave (36), whilst Christ has not (37), proving that that prophecy, in its strictest sense, referred to Him, and not to David, He, and no one else, being the promised Messiah who has acquired forgiveness of sins for all men and through His Gospel announces it for the acceptance of every sinner (38). And every one that by faith receives Him as His Saviour is by His imputed merits justified from all the sins that the Law could not take away, since it neither brings forgiveness of sins nor confers the power of fulfilling it (39). In conclusion Paul warns his hearers not to despise the salvation proffered in and by Christ, lest the punishment prefigured by the terrible and almost incredible first destruction of Jerusalem befall them, namely, the second destruction of that city and together with it the final rejection of the obstinately impenitent people (40 sq.).

After this address Paul and his companions left the synagogue, but were asked to continue their preaching the next sabbath (42); and when the meeting had been dismissed, many followed them to talk more about these important matters, and were by them earnestly exhorted to cling to the grace of God that had been proclaimed to them (43). On the following sabbath nearly the whole population of the place assembled to listen to what the apostles had to say, the majority, of course, being heathens (44). But this aroused the jealous pride

of the Jews, who in their selfish fanaticism could not bear the idea that these idolaters should share in the blessings of the Messiah without first having become Jews. Hence, they now began to oppose what before they had desired to hear, blaspheming even Paul and his preaching as serving not God but Satan (45). In consequence the apostles told them frankly that since they, to whom, as the Old Testament people of God, the announcement of the Messiah's appearance had to be made first, wilfully and obstinately rejected Him and thereby virtually condemned themselves, they would from now on be passed by, and the grateful heathen would receive what the former so wantonly despised (46); and this in accordance with the express promise of God that the blessings of the Messiah should not be limited to the Jews, but should extend to all the nations of the earth (47). At this the heathen rejoiced, praising the Gospel which announced to them that they also had a Saviour; and as many of them as had been foreseen by God as suffering themselves to be led in the common order of salvation and hence had been foreordained to life eternal had faith in Christ kindled in their hearts (48). And now the Gospel spread through the whole country surrounding Antioch (49). The Jews, however, in their envy and anger, aroused the female proselytes of noble rank, who, in their fanatical zeal (comp. Matt. xxiii. 15), again prevailed upon their male relatives to use their influence against Paul and Barnabas, thus compelling them to leave that region (50). The latter, having by a symbolical act declared that their persecutors by their hostile conduct had themselves severed all connection with the messengers of a gracious God and thus with that God Himself, went southeast to the city of Iconium (51). But the members of the young church at Antioch were

not at all discouraged by this ; on the contrary, the bearing of their teachers under undeserved afflictions could not but strengthen them in their joy of having become children of God, and in their growth in Christian faith and life (52).

Ver. 13. **Paul and his company.** Lit. *those around Paul*, he, himself, of course, being included. Paul is now the principal person, though Barnabas is still with them (43 sqq.). **Perga.** One of the principal cities of Pamphylia, situated on the right bank of the River Cestus, about twelve miles from its mouth ; it had an old and renowned temple of Diana. (Comp. xix. 23 sqq.) **John departed from them.** Comp. xii. 25. His motive was hardly, as some have supposed, a dissatisfaction with Paul's missionary methods. (Comp. xv. 37 sqq.)—Ver. 14. **Antioch of Pisidia.** A city of considerable importance, of which vast ruins have been discovered. **They went into the synagogue.** According to Paul's principles. (Comp. 46 ; Rom. i. 16.) **Sat down.** Perhaps on the seats reserved for the rabbis or teachers. This would explain the invitation to speak mentioned in the next verse ; but they may also in some other way have made themselves known as teachers.—Ver. 15. **The law and the prophets.** The Jews, it is not known when, divided the whole Law, or Pentateuch, into 54 sections, called *Parashas*, one to be read every sabbath ; and from the Prophets also 54 sections were selected, called *Haph-tarahs*, to be read in the same way. The number was 54 because they were to suffice also for the Hebrew leap year. (Comp. Luke iv. 17.) **Brethren.** Comp. ii. 29. **Exhortation.** To observe the Law and the Prophets.—Ver. 16. **Beckoning**, etc. Comp. xii. 17. **Men of Israel** (ii. 22). **Ye that fear God.** Comp. x. 2.—Ver. 17. **This people Israel.** Whose members you are. **Our**



**fathers.** The patriarchs. (Comp. Rom. ix. 5.) **Exalted the people.** By increasing their number in spite of all persecutions and by having great miracles performed by their leader and in their behalf. **A high arm.** Lifted up for the protection and deliverance of His people. (Comp. Ex. vi. 1, 6.) The higher the arm is lifted, the severer the blow.—Ver. 18. **Suffered he their manners.** The reading of which this is the translation may be owing to a change, consisting only in the substitution of one letter for another, made in the original because the literal translation of this, viz. *to bear like a nurse or mother*, was not regarded a suitable expression with reference to God. (Comp. Deut. i. 31, where we find the same variant readings in the Septuagint translation.)—Ver. 19. **Seven nations.** Deut. vii. 1. **For about 450 years.** When did this period begin? Some say, and this is most probable, at the birth of Isaac, when God began to fulfil the promise given to Abraham. (Gen. xvii. 1 sqq.) If the text followed by the Authorized Version were correct, there would be an obvious discrepancy between this statement and 1 Kings vi. 1, Paul following a computation, found also in Josephus, which consists in simply adding the years given in the book of Judges and ignoring the indubitable fact that some of the Judges were contemporaneous.—Ver. 21. **Forty years.** The duration of Saul's rule is not mentioned in the Old Testament; a tradition, however, followed by Josephus, states that he ruled eighteen years before Samuel's death and twenty-two after it.—Ver. 22. **When he had removed him.** Rejected him and declared that he was no more regarded as king, though God suffered him to continue in his office for some time, until David had been sufficiently tried and prepared to succeed him. (Comp. 1 Sam. xv. 16 sqq.) **Bare witness.** 1 Sam. xiii. 14 and

Psalm lxxxix. 20 sqq. are combined in a free manner. **Found.** Such a man is not met everywhere; he must be sought. **After my heart.** As my heart wishes. **All my will.** In every direction; not acting arbitrarily in some cases, as Saul did.—Ver. 23. **This.** Emphatic. **According to promise.** Hence to be received and accepted without any doubt or hesitation. **A Saviour, Jesus.** Better, *Jesus as Saviour*; Jesus was, according to His human nature, a descendant of David, and that descendant that was promised as the Saviour of mankind.—Ver. 24. **Before his coming.** Before He entered upon His public ministry (Luke iii. 1 sqq.). **Baptism of repentance.** A baptism demanding and presupposing, as also confirming and sealing, repentance. (Comp. i. 5.) **To all the people of Israel.** To whom the Messiah was sent in the first place. (Comp. Matt. iii. 5 sqq.)—Ver. 25. **Fulfilling his course.** Nearing the end of his activity as forerunner of the Messiah. **What suppose,** etc. Can also be translated thus, *What you suppose me to be, I am not, me* and *I* being emphatic; of course, the Messiah is meant. (Comp. Luke iii. 15 sq.; Matt. iii. 11; John i. 19 sqq.)—Ver. 26. Comp. 16. **Stock.** Family, race. **To us.** Including himself and his companions, indicating that they and his hearers had the same interest in the matter and the same inducement and reason for accepting the Gospel, they being the very people to whom it was sent by God in the first place.—Ver. 27. **For.** It is *the word of salvation* what Paul is preaching concerning Jesus, notwithstanding what was done to Him in Jerusalem by the representatives of the people; *for* they did it in wilful ignorance and by it fulfilled the prophecies concerning the Messiah, etc. **Nor the voices,** etc. Or, and perhaps better, *have also (even) fulfilled the voices of the prophets . . . by condemning him*; the source and cause of

their treatment of Christ was their ignorance concerning Him (Luke xxiii. 34 ; 1 Cor. ii. 8) ; the *effect* and *result*, the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah and thus the incontrovertible proof that Jesus is the Messiah. **Which are read every sabbath.** Comp. 15. Hence they ought to have known better, and their ignorance was their own fault.—Ver. 28. **No cause.** Although from their conduct a person might suppose that they had found such a cause (*subjective* negation).—Ver. 29. **Laid him in a tomb.** As a proof of his actual death. **They.** The people of Jerusalem (27) ; Joseph and Nicodemus (John xix. 38 sqq.) belonged to them, and it is not necessary here to state that they were no enemies of Christ, what they did being no hostile act in itself but simply forming the connecting link between death and resurrection. (Comp. 1 Cor. xv. 3 sq.)—Ver. 30. **But God.** Over against the people of Jerusalem ; He recognized as the Messiah and proclaimed as such Him whom they had rejected and put to death.—Ver. 31. **He was seen,** etc. Comp. i. 3. **From Galilee.** The home of most of His disciples, and that part of the country where He stayed most of the time.—Ver. 32. **We . . . you.** Both words emphatic.—Ver. 33. **How that.** That. **Our children.** Perhaps the true reading here is, *Us, their children*, this explaining the origin of the other readings. **Fulfilled.** Perfectly ; the resurrection of Christ, followed by His ascension as its necessary complement, is the seal God set upon His whole work, as also its climax and crown. **In the second psalm.** Some ancient manuscripts read, *In the first Psalm*, the first and second Psalms being frequently written together, as is still seen in some codices ; or the first Psalm was not numbered, being considered an introduction to the whole collection, as it really is. (Comp. Ps. ii. 7 ; Rom. i. 4.) **Thou . . . I.**

Both emphatic. **Begotten.** Figuratively for, *declared, proved, and in so far installed.* A king may be a king before he is publicly installed and crowned. Jesus was God's Son and the Messiah before His resurrection; but this was His public installation and coronation. (Comp. Heb. i. 5; Eph. i. 20 sqq.)—Ver. 34. **Holy and sure blessings.** Lit. *the holy* (things), *the reliable*, namely, the holy, divine, promises that will surely be fulfilled and realized. (Comp. Isa. lv. 3; 2 Sam. vii. 13-16.)—Ver. 35. **In another.** Ps. xvi. 10; comp. ii. 27 sqq.—Ver. 36. **In his own generation.** That was the limit of his activity. The clause may also be translated, *For his own generation*, for their benefit. **On sleep.** Asleep. The death of a servant of God is simply a sleep and rest till the morning of a happy and glorious eternity. **Was laid unto his fathers.** Was gathered to his fathers, his soul being taken where their souls were—an expression taken from the Old Testament (comp. Gen. xv. 15; xxv. 8; xxxv. 29; Judges ii. 10; 2 Kings xxii. 20), and, since it is distinguished from dying and burial, indicating a life after this.—Ver. 38. **Brethren.** Comp. ii. 29. **Through this man.** He has acquired it, and when He is proclaimed as Redeemer, forgiveness of sins is proclaimed through and in Him.—Ver. 39. Comp. Rom. viii. 3. **Justified from.** By justification delivered from, namely, as to guilt and punishment.—Ver. 40. **In the prophets.** In that part of the Old Testament called *the Prophets*. (Comp. Luke xxiv. 44; John vi. 45.)—Ver. 41. Comp. Hab. i. 5, cited after the Septuagint. **Despisers.** The prophet means, of course, those of his days, that despised his prophecies.—Ver. 42. **As they went out.** Before the assembly had been dismissed, as the next verse shows; the apostles, of course, did not regard themselves any more as regular members of a Jewish congregation or meeting, but simply

went there to preach Christ and left when this had been done. **They besought.** Very likely the officers. (Comp. 15.)—Ver. 43. *Proselytes.* Comp. viii. 27. Not all of them were **devout** in the sense meant here, really worshipping God and intent upon their soul's salvation. Sometimes, however, the word translated *devout* by itself is used to denote proselytes in general, e. g. 50; xvii. 4, 17; —xvi. 14; xviii. 7. **Paul and Barnabas.** Comp. 13. **Continue in the grace of God.** This grace had been revealed to them in Paul's preaching and in its operation in their hearts; if they did not turn away from it but suffered it to go on in its saving work they would have faith kindled and preserved in their hearts and finally be saved eternally. **Continue in.** Remain with, hold fast to; by the power and strength conferred by grace man *can* hold fast to it, and *must* if its saving work is to go on.—Ver. 44. **The next sabbath.** The apostles doubtless had not been idle during the week. **Was gathered.** Very likely in or near the synagogue, since it was the sabbath day.—Ver. 45. **The Jews.** The proselytes here, of course, did not join them. **And blasphemed.** Lit. *contradicting and blaspheming*; their contradicting was connected with blaspheming, i. e. ascribing to Satan and his influence what came from God and His Spirit.—Ver. 46. **It was necessary.** Comp. 14. **To you.** Emphatic. **Thrust it from you.** Reject, repudiate it, by wilful unbelief. **Judge.** By your action, declare, show. **Lo.** A turning point in the world's history, the beginning of a new era and economy.—Ver. 47. **Commanded us.** The passage cited (Isa. xlix. 6; comp. Luke ii. 32) is in the first place a prophecy and promise, but then, and as such, it contains also a command for the servants of Christ, since God deigns to spread His Gospel and kingdom through the service of those to whom it has already come.

**Thee.** The Messiah. **Befor salvation.** Be the means of salvation, the Saviour. **Uttermost part.** Most distant regions.—Ver. 48. **As many as were ordained to life eternal.** Whatever God does in time He has already in eternity determined to do. He alone can, and does, convert and save, and whosoever is converted and saved in time, has been foreordained to conversion and salvation. Whom God will convert and save He has revealed to us in His Word, namely, those that hear His Word and permit the Holy Spirit through it to kindle and preserve true faith in Christ in them. Only those are not converted and saved that wilfully and obstinately resist the converting and saving operation of the Holy Ghost through the Word, as is clearly seen here in the case of the Jews. This rule God has laid down already in eternity, and by virtue of His omniscience He could, and did, apply it even in eternity to every human being, and hence ordained to eternal life, as also to conversion and faith, all those of whom He foreknew that they would not by wilful and pertinacious resistance to His grace and spirit render their conversion and salvation impossible. This is the rule that we must gather from the revelation of God's will in the Bible; its application in time to individuals and nations is often a mystery to us. As to the will and rule of God there can be no doubt, unless we blasphemously ascribe to Him a secret will that is in real conflict with His revealed will; as to its application God will be fully able to justify Himself on the last day. (Comp. Matt. xxii. 1-14; Rom. viii. 28-30; Eph. i. 4. sqq.; John iii. 16; Matt. xi. 28; Rom. xi. 32; 2 Thess. ii. 13; 2 Pet. iii. 9.)—Ver. 50. **Urged on.** Incited, stirred up. **Devout.** Comp. 43. **Stirred up.** Raised, excited, provoked.—Ver. 51. **Shook off the dust,** etc. Comp. Matt. x. 14; Luke ix. 5. **Iconium.** Still

an important place of about 40,000 inhabitants, called Konieh, formerly belonging to Phrygia, but at that time the capital of Lycaonia, in the Middle Ages that of the Seljukian Sultans.—Ver. 52. **The Holy Ghost.** The author of the growth of all that makes a Christian. **Joy** is mentioned especially because mostly needed here. (Comp. x. 38.)

## CHAPTER XIV.

### PAUL'S MISSIONARY ACTIVITY AT ICONIUM, LYSTRA, AND DERBE, AND RETURN TO ANTIOCH.

1-28. And it came to pass in Iconium, that they entered together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of Jews and of Greeks believed. But the Jews that were disobedient stirred up the souls of the Gentiles, and made them evil affected against the brethren. Long time therefore they tarried *there* speaking boldly in the Lord, which bare witness unto the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. But the multitude of the city was divided; and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles. And when there was made an onset both of the Gentiles and of the Jews with their rulers, to entreat them shamefully, and to stone them, they became aware of it, and fled unto the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the region round about: and there they preached the gospel.

And at Lystra there sat a certain man, impotent in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked. The same heard Paul speaking: who, fastening his eyes upon him, and seeing that he had faith to be made whole, said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped up and walked. And when the multitudes saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voice, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercury, because he was the chief speaker. And the priests of Jupiter whose *temple* was before the city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the multitudes. But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it, they rent their garments, and sprang forth among the multitude, crying out and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways. And yet he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness. And with these sayings scarce restrained they the multitudes from doing sacrifice unto them.



But there came Jews thither from Antioch and Iconium : and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. But as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and entered into the city : and on the morrow he went forth with Barnabas to Derbe. And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God. And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed. And they passed through Pisidia, and came to Pamphylia. And when they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia ; and thence they sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been committed to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled. And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all things that God had done with them, and how that he had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles. And they tarried no little time with the disciples.

At Iconium Paul and Barnabas both went into the synagogue of the place and preached the Gospel with such power and effect that not only of the Jews but also of the Gentiles a great many opened their hearts to Christ (1). This again exasperated those Jews that wilfully had closed their hearts so that they roused and embittered the unbelieving Gentiles against the Christians (2). The consequence of all this was that, on the one hand, the apostles stayed there for a considerable time, confiding in the Lord who, according to His promise, confirmed their frank and courageous preaching of His gracious Gospel by miraculous signs that they were enabled to work (3), whilst, on the other hand, a division arose among the people, some siding with the apostles, others with their opponents (4). When, however, a movement was made on the part of the latter to use violence against the former, even to the extent of stoning them (5), these, having become aware of it, fled in a southern direction, namely, to the cities of Lystra and Derbe and their vicin-

ity (6), and there occupied themselves with preaching the Gospel (7).

At Lystra also a helpless cripple listened to the preaching of the Gospel; and Paul, seeing in his face that he believed that Jesus, whom in true faith he recognized as the promised Messiah, could, and, if this were best for him, also would remove his bodily infirmity (8 sq.), by one word of confident command gave him the power for the first time to use his feet, which power he gladly and immediately exercised, jumping up and walking about (10). At this sight the ignorant heathen population broke out into the cry that the gods had come down in human form to visit them (11), namely, the highest god with his companion and interpreter; and this very naturally, in their excitement and amazement, they did in their native tongue, so that the apostles did not know at first what they were about (12). When, however, the priest of Jupiter, whose temple was outside of the city, brought to the city gates the material for a sacrifice, oxen and garlands to decorate them (13), and the apostles learned that the intention was to pay them divine worship, they manifested their disapproval in the lively Oriental manner and ran out among the crowd, calling upon them with a loud voice to desist from their well-meant but in reality blasphemous undertaking (14). For they were about to pay divine honors to mere mortal men like themselves, to men, moreover, whose very life-work it was to preach the Gospel that was intended to convert them, as others, from the service of vain, unreal gods to that of the only living God, the Creator of all that exists (15); of that God who, indeed, in past generations had not granted a special revelation to the Gentiles, but left them to the light of nature (16) and to His universal revelation in the works of the first article that

could, and should, lead them to seek the true God who now revealed Himself to them through His Gospel (17). But even thus the apostles could scarcely prevent the people from offering divine honor to them (18). Soon, however, these ignorant people were carried to the other extreme. The apostles, namely, were followed by their Jewish enemies from Pisidian Antioch and Iconium, and these succeeded in making that proverbially fickle and faithless people regard them in an entirely different light, perhaps in that of emissaries of a hostile deity or evil spirit, so that they even stoned Paul, the spokesman, and dragged him out of the city a lifeless person, as they thought (19). But he was yet to be spared for greater work in the service of his Master, and hence, when the sorrowing disciples that, notwithstanding all opposition, he had been permitted to make in that city, had gathered around him, he, by the grace and power of God, was enabled to rise and return to the city. On the next day, however, he left it together with Barnabas (20). And they now went to the last place on their present journey, namely, to Derbe, some distance southeast, where they do not seem to have incurred much opposition, being permitted to preach the Gospel and thereby to bring a goodly number to faith in Christ (21). And then they returned the same way they had come, visiting the principal places where they had preached before, strengthening the faith of the new Christians, exhorting them to persevere in that faith notwithstanding all afflictions and temptations, and showing them that a disciple of Christ cannot expect to enter heavenly glory and happiness on any other way than his Master, namely, through much tribulation and suffering (22). And in order not to leave the new congregation without some human guidance, the apostles, in connection with the respective con-

gregations, appointed for every one of them spiritual leaders. Then, in solemn and fervid prayer, they commended their fellow-believers to the gracious guidance and protection of their common Saviour (23). Returning through Pisidia and Pamphylia (24), they came again to Perga, where they now stopped to preach the Gospel, though, as it would seem, not with much success. From here they went to the coast by land, to the port of Attalia (25), where they set sail for Syrian Antioch, whence, about four years before, amid the prayers and best wishes of their fellow-believers, they had begun this first missionary tour (A. D. 46-50), now so successfully completed (26). There, in a meeting called for that purpose, they gratefully related all that God, their faithful Companion, had wrought through them, and especially that He had given the heathen grace to become believers in Christ (27). And here now they stayed a considerable time, about two years, in blessed communion with their fellow-Christians (28).

Ver. 1. **Iconium.** Comp. xiii. 51. **Greeks.** Comp. xi. 20. Some suppose the proselytes of the gate (viii. 27) to be meant here, so that they would be distinguished from the Gentiles mentioned in the next verse; but there does not seem to be any necessity for thus limiting the sense.—Ver. 2. Comp. xiii. 45, 50.—Ver. 3. **In the Lord.** Lit. *upon the Lord*; the Lord was the basis and foundation of their courageous preaching. **Bare witness.** Comp. Mark xvi. 17 sqq. **Signs and wonders.** Comp. ii. 19. These proved that they were servants of the living God and, hence, that their preaching was divine truth. **Word of his grace.** Proceeding from His grace and announcing and containing His grace as exhibited by Jesus Christ and merited by Him. The Gospel is in truth a means of grace, yea, correctly understood, *the* means of grace, since

it makes the sacraments what they are, viz. means of grace. **By their hands.** Comp. v. 12.—Ver. 4. **And.** Explanatory, *namely*.—Ver. 5. **Onset.** Hostile movement, assault. **Both of the Gentiles,** etc. Lit. *not only of the Gentiles, but also of the Jews,* etc. The Jews were not satisfied with having incited the Gentiles, but even took part themselves in the hostile agitation consequent upon this, not even their rulers, elders and officers of the synagogue regarding it below their dignity to do so. **Them.** No doubt, primarily the apostles and their companions (xiii. 13); but the expression in the next verse, *and the region round about*, would seem to indicate that at least some of the new Christians are also meant.—Ver. 6. **Cities of Lycaonia.** This almost looks as if Iconium were not regarded as a city of Lycaonia, but still as belonging to Phrygia. (Comp. xiii. 51.) **Lystra and Derbe.** “In the records of early councils the names of the bishops of Lystra appear. The remains of this once famous city are called now by the singular name of *Binbir Kilisseh*, or the Thousand and One Churches, from the traces still visible of the numerous sacred edifices with which it was once adorned.” (*Pop. Comm.*) “Little or nothing is known of” Derbe. “Its very ruins are only identified with doubt.”—Ver. 8. **Sat.** Being lame; perhaps he also begged his support. (Comp. iii. 2; John ix. 8.) **Who never had walked.** So miserable and helpless was his condition.—Ver. 9. **Heard.** Attentively (Imperfect). **Fastening his eyes upon him.** To see in his face how he was affected by the Gospel. (Comp. iii. 4.) Not even the healing of the body, much less of the soul, was thrust upon any one; there had to be some degree of receptiveness and desire, wrought by the Gospel. **To be made.** That he would be made.—Ver. 10. **In the likeness of men.** As so often according to the

superstitious belief of the common people especially ; perhaps a caricatured reminiscence of what in paradise really took place, and also sometimes later. (Comp. Gen. iii. 8 ; xviii. 1 ; Deut. xxxiv. 10 ; etc.)—Ver. 12. **Barnabas**. Very likely of an imposing stature and older than **Paul**, who in eloquence reminded the people of Mercury, the herald and interpreter of the gods and the companion of Jupiter. These two gods, according to an old myth, had formerly visited the inhabitants of these regions (comp. the legend of Philemon and Baucis, as told by *Ovid*, *Metamorph.* viii. 611 sqq.) ; and as there also was a temple of Jupiter before the city, the opinion was natural for these superstitious people that this god, together with his usual companion, had come.—Ver. 13. **Whose temple**. Lit. *who* ; a god was supposed to be present in his temple. **The gates**. Viz. of the city, where the sacrifice was to be performed in honor of the gods who were supposed to be in the city. **Would have done**. Was determined to do.—Ver. 14. **Apostles**. In the wider sense, since Barnabas could be called so only in this sense. (Comp. i. 21 sq. ; Rom. i. 1 ; Gal. i. 1 ; 2 Cor. i. 1 ; xi. 5.) **Barnabas**. Mentioned first here because he was supposed to be the highest god for whom especially the sacrifice was intended. (Comp. xiii. 13.) **Rent their garments**. Comp. Matt. xxvi. 65. The garments were torn about a hand-breadth on the breast, beginning at the upper part.—Ver. 15. **Sirs**. Lit. *men*. (Comp. ii. 22.) **Why do ye these things**. Or, better, *what are you doing there ?* **Of like passions**. Or, feelings and affections, nature and quality. **Bring you good tidings**, etc. Whoever really accepts the Gospel cannot but turn, etc. ; the exhortation to receive in faith Jesus, and in Him the triune God, includes the turning from all imaginary gods. **These vain things**. Better, *these*

*vain gods*, gods that, existed simply in their imagination, and to whom they also supposed the apostles to belong. **Heaven, earth, and sea.** The main divisions of the visible world.—Ver. 16. **Generations gone by.** The time of the Old Testament economy when one particular people was the divinely-appointed bearer of divine revelation that was ultimately to benefit the whole human race. (Comp. Gen. xii. 3.) **Nations.** Better, heathens or Gentiles. **In their own ways.** Without any special supernatural revelation and direction.—Ver. 17. **Witness.** Testimony, so that they could have known Him, at least to some extent. (Comp. Rom. i. 20; Acts xvii. 26 sqq.) **Did good.** In this that He **gave you**, etc., thereby **filling**, etc. **Your hearts.** The gratification of our natural wants is at the same time a gratification of our heart.—Ver. 18. **With these sayings.** Lit. *saying this*, with these words.—Ver. 19. **Antioch.** Comp. xiii. 14, 50. **Iconium.** Comp. 1. **Persuaded.** To look upon the matter as they presented it. **Stoned.** The usual Jewish capital punishment; hence the Jews were the leaders also in the execution of their murderous plans, the heathen population assisting, or, at least, not preventing them, which they surely would have done if they had not been *persuaded* by the Jews. **Dragged him out**, etc. As a corpse that was not to remain in the city.—Ver. 20. **The disciples.** Very likely young Timothy among them, who from this time on was a devoted and enthusiastic follower of Paul and his divine Master. (Comp. xvi. 1; 1 Cor. iv. 17; 1 Tim. i. 2, 18; 2 Tim. i. 2; iii. 10 sq.) **Derbe.** Comp. 8.—Ver. 22. **And (saying) that.** Comp. Matt. x. 38; Rom. viii. 17; 1 Thess. iii. 3; 1 Pet. iv. 12 sqq.—Ver. 23. **Appointed.** The word here used in the original means in the first place, according to its derivation, *to vote by stretching out the hands*; then, *to create or appoint*

*by vote*; then, in general, *to elect, appoint, create*. There is no necessity of taking here the last signification instead of the second, which evidently is the one intended in the only other passage where this word occurs in the New Testament, viz. 2 Cor. viii. 19. Accordingly the apostles conducted the election or appointment, but the congregations signified by vote whom they thought worthy and able. **Fasting.** Comp. xiii. 3. **On whom they had believed.** And still were believing (Pluperfect).—Ver. 25. **Perga.** Comp. xiii. 13. **Attalia.** Built by, and named after, Attalus Philadelphus, king of Pergamus, commanding the trade of Syria and Egypt; famous during the crusades under the name of Satalaia; now called Adalia, and a much frequented harbor, having about 13,000 inhabitants.—Ver. 26. **Whence,** etc. Comp. xiii. 3.—Ver. 27. **That God had done with them.** Comp. Matt. xxviii. 20; Mark xvi. 20; 1 Cor. xv. 10. **A door of faith.** An opportunity and possibility of coming to faith in Christ. (Comp. as to this figurative use of *door* 1 Cor. xvi. 9; 2 Cor. ii. 12; Col. iv. 3.)



## PAUL AND BARNABAS AT JERUSALEM, AND THE FIRST COUNCIL OF THE CHURCH.

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### CHAPTER XV.

(Comp. Gal. ii. 1-10.)

#### (A.) PAUL AND BARNABAS ARE SENT TO JERUSALEM (A. D. 52).

1-5. And certain men came down from Judæa and taught the brethren, *saying*, Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved. And when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and questioning with them, *the brethren* appointed that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. They therefore, being brought on their way by the church, passed through both Phœnicia and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church and the apostles and the elders, and they rehearsed all things that God had done with them. But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees who believed, saying, It is needful to circumcise them and to charge them to keep the law of Moses.

Whilst Paul and Barnabas were staying at Antioch, some men from Judæa came there who, notwithstanding what had taken place in the case of Cornelius (x. 9 sqq., 44 sqq.) and the evident blessing that rested upon Paul's missionary activity among the Gentiles, still held that circumcision and with it, as the rite of initiation, submission to the whole ceremonial law given to the people of

the Old Testament through Moses (comp. Gal. v. 3) were a necessary addition to faith in Christ for every one that desired to be saved (1). As Paul and Barnabas could not concede this without condemning their own practice, divinely sanctioned as it was, there naturally arose a great dissension and dispute between them and their opponents; and the church at Antioch regarded it best to send the two missionaries and some others to Jerusalem, up to this time the seat of the majority of apostles and the centre and mother of the whole Church, to have this important question authoritatively decided (2). Having been accompanied by the brethren for some distance, Paul and Barnabas took the nearest route, through Phœnicia and Samaria, and everywhere caused great joy by relating how also the Gentiles had been converted to Christ (3). At Jerusalem they were formally received by the Church and all its officers; and also here they related all that God had accomplished through them (4). But here too they immediately encountered opposition, some Christians that formerly had been Pharisees and still had Pharisaical notions clinging to them taking the same ground as the opponents at Antioch (5).

Ver. 1. **Certain men.** No doubt belonging to the number of those Jewish Christians that formerly had been Pharisees. (Comp. 5.) According to a tradition found in the writings of Epiphanius the later Gnostic heretic Cerinthus was among them. **Taught.** Persistently (Imperfect). **Moses.** The mediator of the Old Testament economy, hence his law a divine law, but not meant as a means of salvation. (Comp. John i. 17; Gal. iii. 17 sqq.; Col. ii. 16 sq.)—Ver. 2. **Appointed that Paul,** etc. According to Gal. ii. 2, Paul also had a revelation to go there. **Certain other.** Perhaps including Titus (Gal. ii. 1), though he may not have been an official delegate.

**Elders.** Comp. xi. 30.—Ver. 3. **Declaring.** Lit. *narrating in full*, relating, describing.—Ver. 4. Comp. xiv. 27. **Rehearsed.** Announced, made known, reported. This report was not yet the official one (12), but preliminary and informal.—Ver. 5. **Rose up.** Arose to speak. **Sect.** Comp. v. 17. **Pharisees.** Comp. xxiii. 6. **It is needful.** Is necessary, must be, there is no possibility of being saved without this.

### (B.) THE FIRST COUNCIL OF THE CHURCH.

6-29. And the apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider of this matter. And when there had been much questioning, Peter rose up, and said unto them,

Brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they.

And all the multitude kept silence; and they hearkened unto Barnabas and Paul rehearsing what signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying,

Brethren, hearken unto me: Symeon hath rehearsed how first God did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

After these things I will return,

And I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen;

And I will build again the ruins thereof,

And I will set it up:

That the residue of men may seek after the Lord,

And all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called,

Saith the Lord, who maketh these things known from the beginning of the world.

Wherefore my judgment is, that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles turn to God; but that we write unto them, that they abstain from the pollution of idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled,

and from blood: For Moses from generations of old hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath.

Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men out of their company, and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*, Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: and they wrote *thus* by them, The apostles and the elder brethren unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greeting: Forasmuch as we have heard that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls; to whom we gave no commandment; it seemed good unto us, having come to one accord, to choose out men and send them unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who themselves also shall tell you the same things by word of mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, it shall be well with you. Fare ye well.

The leaders of the Church, together with the congregation at Jerusalem (comp. 12, 22, 25), met to consider the important matter that not simply had been brought to their notice by the delegates sent from Antioch, but now also had become a mooted question in their own midst (6). After a lively debate had taken place, Peter arose and reminded his fellow-believers of the well-known fact that many years ago God had already through his instrumentality received Gentiles into the Church (7), testifying to the condition of their hearts by giving to them the Holy Spirit in the same way as to the first, Jewish, Christians (8), and cleansing their hearts from the guilt and rule of sin by the same means that had been used in the case of the first believers, namely, by faith only, without requiring anything else, as circumcision or the observance of the Law (9). Hence, to place the burden of the Law, as a condition of being Christians, upon the converts from heathenism, of a law, moreover, that had even proved insufficient to save the Old Testament

people of God, would evidently be acting as if the will of God in the matter either had not been clearly expressed, or could be set aside with impunity, and thus challenging the displeasure of God (10). If the first, Jewish, Christians placed their only hope for salvation in the grace of God merited by Jesus the Christ, and in no way in the works of the Law, surely Christians from the heathen ought not to be required to submit to the laws and ordinances that were intended only for the preparation and education of the former for faith in Christ (11). This full and decided indorsement given to the position of Paul and Barnabas by one of the foremost apostles of the circumcision (Gal. ii. 9) naturally silenced the opposition, so that Barnabas and Paul could relate how God Himself evidently had sanctioned their activity among the heathen by many miraculous deeds (12). After they had finished, James, the principal leader of the Church at Jerusalem, noted for his strict compliance with the accustomed mode of Jewish life, addressed his fellow-believers (13). Referring to what Peter had stated with regard to the gracious care of God to gather also out of the Gentiles a people believing in His revelation in Christ (14), he proved that this statement is in perfect accord with the prophecies of old, citing one of many (15), in which God promises that, after punishing His people for their grievous sins, He will return to them in forgiving grace and build again His ruined Church by leading to Christ all those who do not wilfully resist Him, and thus founding the Church of the New Testament (16), to which also the heathen shall be called, in accordance with the gracious counsel of God to reveal Himself also to them; and thus receiving the heathen into the New Testament Church without requiring anything but faith in Jesus the Christ is simply carrying out what God had determined already

in eternity and promised from the beginning (17 sq.). Hence, the decision of James is that the converts from heathenism ought not to be troubled by any Old Testament legal requirements (19), but should simply be written to to abstain from certain things that among the heathen were considered matters of indifference, but to men of Jewish origin were peculiarly offensive, namely, the defilement contracted by eating meat remaining over from heathen sacrifices or taken from animals that had been strangled and whose blood had not been poured out, eating blood, and fornication, the transgression of the sixth commandment, hence a grievous sin in itself, but here mentioned because among the heathen in general it was, and is, regarded as a matter of indifference, yea, sometimes even as a part of worship (20). To impose these first-mentioned restrictions for the present also upon the Christians of heathen origin, in order to avoid giving offence to weak Jewish Christians, seemed necessary so much the more because the Law of Moses containing them was known everywhere, being for a long time already constantly read in the synagogues that were scattered throughout the Roman Empire (21). Thereupon it seemed good to the whole assembly to choose men out of their midst to go to Antioch together with Paul and Barnabas and to assist them in convincing all the brethren there of the correctness of the position taken; and consequently two leading men of the congregation were chosen, Judas and Silas (22). These were also to deliver the letter containing the summary result of the deliberations of the council and informing the Gentile Christians, in the first place those of Antioch and the whole province of Syria, as also of Cilicia whither the trouble also seems to have spread (23), that, in order to counteract the disturbing and soul-destroying work-right-

eous teachings of some self-sent, meddlesome Jewish Christians (24), by the unanimous resolution of the church of Jerusalem Judas and Silas had been sent to them to accompany Barnabas and Paul, men who could be recommended for their self-sacrificing service in the preaching of the Gospel, and to explain more fully by word of mouth the decision reached under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, namely, that the Gentile Christians were not to be burdened by anything but the, under the circumstances necessary, careful observance of the above-mentioned points, which observance by the grace of God would inure to their spiritual well-being by preserving peace and harmony in their midst (25-29).

Ver. 6. Comp. Gal. ii. 2 sqq. **Consider of.** Lit. *see concerning*.—Ver. 7. **Peter.** The natural leader and spokesman of the apostles (comp. i. 13, 15, etc.), and in this case the one that had the oldest experience in the matter on hand. **Brethren.** Comp. ii. 29. **Ye.** Emphatic; they knew, if others did not. **A good while ago.** Lit. *from ancient days*, days of the beginning, viz. of the Christian Church, about fourteen years ago. (Comp. x. 1 sqq.) **God made choice among you**, etc. From your number He chose me to be the first missionary to the heathen. Peter belonged to the same class to which they belonged, was one of the first Jewish Christians; hence, he belonged to their number and company. He could, of course, also have said, *among us*, as some copies have it by way of a supposed necessary emendation. **Gospel.** This now so common word Luke has only here and xx. 24, not at all in his Gospel; nor is it found in John.—Ver. 8. Comp. x. 44 sqq. **Which knoweth the heart.** It depended upon the condition of their hearts whether the Gentiles could be regarded as real and true Christians, viz. whether they had faith in Christ and were

regenerated by this faith.—Ver. 9. **He made no distinction.** As He would have done if besides faith in Christ circumcision and the observance of the Law were also necessary for a Christian. This fundamental doctrine of Christianity is equally emphasized by the foremost of the apostles, by Peter here and 1 Pet. i. 18-21; by Paul xiii. 38 sq.; Rom. iii. 24 sqq., and often; by John 1 Epistle i. 9; Rev. vii. 14.—Ver. 10. **Tempt.** Try what He will do if you oppose His manifest will, risk His displeasure. **That ye should put.** By endeavoring to put. **A yoke.** A heavy burden of commandments, laws, and regulations. (Comp. Gal. v. 1;—Matt. xi. 29 sq.) **Bear.** Observe and fulfil completely; and because they could not do this the Law was a burden and yoke in the bad sense of the term.—Ver. 11. **Through the grace,** etc. Emphatic; not by the Law and its works. **Grace of the Lord Jesus.** Shown by Him in becoming our Saviour, merited by Him as our substitute, and offered to us through His Gospel. **As they.** The Christians of Gentile descent, viz. just as they believe to be saved through the grace, etc. Peter knows of no other way of salvation for Jewish Christians than that for Gentile Christians; hence, there can be no necessity for the latter to become Jews before becoming Christians, or to become, as far as possible, Jewish Christians. That Peter so fully agrees with Paul in this most important doctrine of justification in no way conflicts with Gal. ii. 11 sqq., since Paul there (15 sqq.) expressly affirms that in *doctrine* there was no difference between him and Peter, though the latter in *practice* had proved himself timid and weak and thereby had given offence.—Ver. 12. **Kept silence.** There was no more excited debating. **Hearkened.** Gave ear, listened, without interruption (Imperfect). **Barnabas.** Mentioned first, as also ver. 25, because he was older in



years and in his connection with the Church. (Comp. iv. 36; ix. 27; xi. 22 sqq.) **Rehearsing.** Comp. 4. **Signs and wonders.** Comp. ii. 19.—Ver. 13. **They.** Barnabas and Paul. **James.** Comp. xii. 17. **Answered.** Said what he had to say with regard to this matter. (Comp. v. 8.) **Brethren.** Comp. ii. 29.—Ver. 14. **Symeon.** The original, Hebrew, name of Peter (John i. 42) seems to have been the one mostly used among the Jewish Christians. (Comp. Luke xxiv. 34.) The form found here and 2 Pet. i. 1 (comp. Luke ii. 25) is more like the Hebrew original (*Shim'on*) than the more usual *Simon*. **Visit.** Look after, have a care for, provide for. **For his name.** Believing in His name or revelation, bearing His name, being His people, the people of the true, living God. (Comp. xviii. 10; Rom. ix. 24 sqq.)—Ver. 15. **To this.** With this truth and fact.—Vers. 16 sq. Comp. Amos ix. 11 sq., given here in a free citation after the Septuagint translation. **After these things.** In the days of the Messiah. **Return.** God had to punish His people and hence could not dwell among them in grace; but He will return in grace, through Christ. **Tabernacle of David.** His splendid palace had become a mere tent or hut—a figure and symbol of the theocracy or Old Testament Church, the people of Israel in their reduced and low condition. **Set up.** Rear again, build anew.—Ver. 17. **The residue of men.** Explained by **all the Gentiles.** The Septuagint translation, in the first clause of this verse especially, does not give the *literal* sense of the present Hebrew original; but the sense in general, as far as it proves the apostle's assertion, is given, since Israel's *possessing the remnant of Edom and all the nations*, spoken of in the original, is not meant in a hostile political, but in the gracious Messianic sense, they all becoming the blessed subjects of the Messiah. **Upon whom my name**

**is called.** Who belong to me as my people and hence are called my people. (Comp. James ii. 7 ; Deut. xxviii. 10 ; Isa. lxiii. 19 ; Jer. xiv. 9.)—Ver. 18. **Known from the beginning of the world.** These words are not found in Amos, neither in the original Hebrew nor in the Septuagint translation. Perhaps James added them to the citation to emphasize the salutary contents of this prophecy as a truth known from the very beginning of the human race, being contained already in the first Gospel concerning the woman's seed, i. e. the human race, conquering Satan in Christ (Gen. iii. 15), as also in the promises given to Abraham that in him and his seed all nations were to be blessed (Gen. xii. 3 ; xviii. 18). Others understand these words as saying that God simply carries out now what He did not first decree at the time of Amos or at that of the apostles, but what was known and decreed by Him already in eternity ; and this is in accordance with the reading followed by the Authorized Version, which, however, is not so well attested.—Ver. 19. **My judgment is.** Lit. *I judge, I* being emphatic ; whatever others may judge and think right, his judgment is this.—Ver. 20. **Pollution of idols.** Comp. 29 ; Ex. xxxiv. 15 ; 1 Cor. viii. 1 sqq. ; Rom. xiv. 1 sqq. **Fornication.** By some understood as meaning here only incest, marriage between persons too closely related. (Comp. Lev. xviii. 6 sqq. ; xx. 11 sqq.) But this limitation is not indicated by anything in the text. **Strangled.** Comp. Lev. xvii 13 ; Deut. xii. 16, 23. **Blood.** Comp. Lev. xvii. 10 sqq. ; Gen ix. 4. Here, of course, the blood is meant that was no more in the body of the animal. **Pollutions** may, in the original, belong to all the four things mentioned, viz. not only to idols, but also to fornication, what is strangled, and blood, so that *of* would be the correct preposition instead of *from* ; the

Gentile Christians are to abstain from pollutions that are brought upon a person by idols, fornication, what is strangled, and blood. Some find here an allusion to the Noachian commandments. (Comp. viii. 27).—Ver. 21. **From generations of old.** From olden times, for centuries. Some understand this verse as having the following sense : The almost universal reading of Moses and his Law has made the Gentiles acquainted with the contents of the latter, and thus they will, when they have become Christians, be the more willing to observe those few elementary points, in order that the Jewish Christians may not be offended too much.—Ver. 22. **Judas.** Perhaps a brother of Joseph Barsabbas mentioned i. 23 ; some regard him as being the same person as the latter. **Silas.** The same as Silvanus (1 Thess. i. 1 ; 2 Thess. i. 1 ; 2 Cor. i. 19), later on (40) a companion of Paul. **Chief men.** Leading, ruling men (comp. Heb. xiii. 7, 17, 24), perhaps the same as *speakers, teachers* (comp. xiv. 12 the expression *chief speaker*, lit. leading in word or speech).—Ver. 23. **Wrote by them.** Lit. *having written through their hands* ; they were to deliver the writing or letter. **The elder brethren.** Not, *elders and brethren*, the *and* being omitted in the best copies. So they write in the name, and as the officers, of the whole congregation (22). *The elder brethren* are, of course, the same as the *elders*. **Antioch.** Comp. xi. 20.—Ver. 24. **Subverting.** Destroying, ruining, as much as lay in them.—Ver. 25. **Come to one accord.** Reached a unanimous conclusion ; it was not simply the opinion of a majority. **Barnabas and Paul.** Comp. 12.—Ver. 26. **Hazarded.** Risked, jeopardized, exposed to injury and death. **Name.** Revelation, Gospel. (Comp. v. 41).—Ver. 28. **And to us.** Led and guided by the Holy Ghost who is the primary author of the decision ; the principal and the instrumental causes

are mentioned together. The congregation, i. e. the laity, is, of course, included (22). **No greater burden.** Excepting the prohibition of fornication it was a burden, i. e. something that in its nature is not binding on a Christian, but that he can be asked only to bear and observe out of charity, for the sake of weaker brethren. (Comp. Col. ii. 16; Rom. xiv. 1 sqq.)—Ver. 29. **Keep.** Continually and carefully. In such cases where only love and charity can and should be the motive, without the existence of a positive and express commandment, a Christian ought to be careful and conscientious. Love ought to be the strongest motive; where it is not, it is not what it ought to be.—Paul's journey to Jerusalem related in this chapter is the same as that spoken of Gal. ii. 1 sqq. The latter cannot be identical with the one mentioned Acts xi. 30, since this, having taken place before A. D. 44, would not leave fourteen years between it and Paul's conversion (Gal. ii. 1), but only about nine. Nor can it be the same as that indicated Acts xviii. 22, since this was evidently of very short duration, not leaving time for lengthy discussions and deliberations, and since Barnabas was then no more a companion of Paul (comp. Gal. ii. 1 sqq.; Acts xv. 39). Moreover, the points at issue are the same in both reports, Acts. xv. and Gal. ii., and the decision reached is also identical. The two reports complement each other, each one mentioning only what was essential to the plan of the respective writer.

### (C.) PAUL AND BARNABAS RETURN TO ANTIOCH.

30-41. So they, when they were dismissed, came down to Antioch; and having gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle. And when they had read it, they rejoiced for the consolation. And Judas and Silas, being themselves also prophets, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them. And after they had spent some time *there*, they were dismissed in peace from the brethren unto those that had sent

them forth. But Paul and Barnabas tarried in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

And after some days Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us return now and visit the brethren in every city wherein we proclaimed the word of the Lord, *and see* how they fare. And Barnabas was minded to take with them John also, who was called Mark. But Paul thought not good to take with them him who withdrew from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And there arose a sharp contention, so that they parted asunder one from the other, and Barnabas took Mark with him, and sailed away unto Cyprus; but Paul chose Silas, and went forth, being commended by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

The letter sent by the Church at Jerusalem to that at Antioch was duly delivered (30), and caused great joy by quieting and reassuring the hearts troubled by the assertions and claims of the Judaistic party (31). Moreover, the two delegates from Jerusalem were diligent in confirming and inculcating also orally the contents of the letter and thus to strengthen the faith of the brethren, wherein they were so much the more successful as also they had the gift of prophecy (32). Having stayed for some time, they were dismissed, with fraternal wishes, to those that had sent them—a testimony of the perfect harmony between the two Churches and their leaders (33). Paul and Barnabas, however, remained yet at Antioch, and in fellowship with many others carried on the prospering work there, instructing those that already had become Christians and bringing the glad tidings of salvation to others (35). But after some time Paul thought it best to visit again all those places where he and Barnabas had been permitted to gather Christians on their first missionary tour, and to see how they were getting along; hence, he called upon Barnabas to accompany him again for this purpose (36). The latter was willing to do so, but wished to take along again his cousin Mark (37). Paul, however, was averse to this, not regarding it advis-

able to choose for an assistant in such an important undertaking a man who without valid reason had left them and their holy work the first time (38). As Barnabas did not yield to the remonstrances of Paul and the latter felt bound to act in accordance with his convictions, they parted in bitterness. Barnabas took Mark, visiting again his native island Cyprus (39); Paul selected for his assistant Silas, and accompanied by the prayers and best wishes of the brethren, who evidently sided with him, through Syria also first went to his native country, Cilicia, strengthening the faith of the brethren (40 sq.). Thus, instead of one missionary journey, two were undertaken, God also here overruling the weaknesses and sins of His children for good. That there was no lasting enmity between Paul on the one hand and Barnabas and Mark on the other, is seen from the honorable and fraternal mention Paul repeatedly makes of the latter (Col. iv. 10; 2 Tim. iv. 11; Philemon 24;—1 Cor. ix. 6).

Ver. 30. **Dismissed.** By the congregation at Jerusalem (comp. 22), after they had received their instructions and parting wishes. **Came down.** Jerusalem being higher than Antioch, both in a local and in a moral and religious sense. **Having gathered the multitude together.** Thus the letter of a congregation, the laity included, was delivered to another congregation, not simply to its leaders or clergy.—Ver. 31. **Consolation.** Encouragement, reassurance.—Ver. 32. **Themselves.** Like Paul and Barnabas. (Comp. xiii. 1.) But the Greek original can be construed and understood also in a different sense, viz.: *And Judas and Silas themselves also, being prophets.* (Comp. 27.) According to their instructions they added their oral encouragement to that contained in the letter; and this they could do so much the better on account of their special gift. (Comp. xi. 27.)

**Exhorted.** The same root as *consolation* (31), hence, *encouraged, reassured*. **Confirmed.** Strengthened.—Ver. 33. **In peace.** Compare the farewell greeting, *Depart, or go, in peace* (xvi. 36; Mark v. 34; Luke vii. 50; viii. 48), *peace* meaning blessing, happiness, and welfare of every description, here, of course, first of all in spiritual matters.—Ver. 34. This whole verse is not found in the best manuscripts. Some one who thought that verse 40 required such an explanation seems to have added it, perhaps first only in the form of a marginal note, another copyist then regarding it as a part of the text and incorporating it.—Ver. 35. **Preaching.** Lit. *preaching the Gospel*. This might simply be explanatory of **teaching**, but it is better to understand it of the strictly missionary activity as distinguished from the teaching in public worship of Christians. **With many others also.** So large was the field.—Ver. 36. **How they fare.** How they are, what their condition is.—Ver. 37. **Was minded.** Wished, was desirous.—Ver. 38. **Thought not good.** Did not regard it meet, fit, right. **Withdrew.** (Comp. xiii. 5, 13.) The literal translation of this verse, bringing out more emphatically the position of Paul, is, *But Paul thought good, him who withdrew from them from Pamphylia and went not with them to the work, not to take with them this one.*—Ver. 39. **Contention.** Irritation, animosity, bitterness; not enmity or hostility. The apostles were also men with human passions and weaknesses; neither their intellect nor their will was perfectly sanctified and cleansed from sin. **And Barnabas took Mark with him.** In consequence of that quarrel, and, as it would seem, immediately after it had taken place. He, naturally, felt hurt most.—Ver. 40. **Chose.** For himself, as his companion. **Being commended,** etc. (Comp. xiv. 26.)—Ver. 41. **Cilicia.** Paul, as well as Barnabas, began

his new missionary activity at home; and just as Paul did not confine himself to Cilicia, so Barnabas may be supposed to have gone also to other countries. We know not where he went and died. Tradition makes him work at Rome, Milan, and Alexandria, and at last die a martyr's death in his native island.



## PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY TOUR—A.D. 52-55 (Chs. XVI.—XVIII.).

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### CHAPTER XVI.

#### (A.) PAUL VISITS AGAIN THE CHURCHES IN ASIA.

1-10. And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra : and behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewess which believed ; but his father was a Greek. The same was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him ; and he took and circumcised him because of the Jews that were in those parts : for they all knew that his father was a Greek. And as they went on their way through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, which had been ordained of the apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.

And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden of the Holy Ghost to speak the word in Asia ; and when they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia ; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not ; and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night ; There was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

Coming to the neighboring cities of Derbe and Lystra, Paul unexpectedly found at the latter place a young Christian, hitherto unknown to him, but doubtless a fruit of his first missionary labor here, Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman that had become a believer in Jesus

the Christ and of a Greek father (1). This young man enjoyed a good reputation among the Christians not only of his native town but also of the more important city of Iconium (2). Hence Paul, who, it seems, desired to have another young companion in the place of Mark, resolved to take him along on his further travels. But on account of the many Jews dwelling in that region, who knew the circumstances of Timothy and would have taken offence at an uncircumcised herald of the advent of the Messiah promised first to the circumcision, he first circumcised him (3). In the same way he, together with his companions on their journey through the country, did not neglect to act in accordance with the decree of the council at Jerusalem (4). The consequence of their activity, under the Lord's blessing, was the continued inward and outward growth of the churches (5). The intention of Paul was to go westward and preach the Gospel also in the western countries of Asia Minor; but the Holy Ghost indicated to him that he was to continue his journey to the northwest and found churches in Phrygia and Galatia (6). When now they had come toward the boundaries of Mysia, they tried to go northward; but the Holy Spirit, being granted them in a special manner in their special service of Jesus, prevented them again, thus leading them in a northwestern direction, until they came to the seaport of Troas (7 sq.). Here a vision was granted Paul: a man appeared to him at night calling him over to Macedonia to show the people there the way to real, eternal happiness (9). Now they were certain of the direction the Lord wanted them to take, and forthwith endeavored to carry out His will (10).

Ver. 1. **Derbe and Lystra.** Comp. xiv. 6. **There.** At Lystra. This is the most natural interpretation and the only one in accordance with xx. 4, where certainly it

would be stated if Timothy had been of Derbe as well as Gaius. The next verse also shows this to be the true interpretation. (Comp. xiv. 8-20.) **A Jewess which believed.** Comp. 2 Tim. i. 5. **A Greek.** Possibly a proselyte of the gate (comp. viii. 27), but certainly not a Christian, according to the wording of our text.—Ver. 3. **Circumcised him.** Becoming as a Jew to the Jews that he might gain Jews (1 Cor. ix. 20), since he could do so without, as in the case of Titus (Gal. ii. 3 sq.), sacrificing any Gospel principle, it not being demanded as a divine obligation by Judaistic Christians. What must be refused when a principle is at stake can, nay, sometimes should be done when simply charity is in question. (Comp. Rom. xiv. 1 sqq.) **His father was a Greek.** And in the exercise of his authority as father had prevented the circumcision of Timothy whom his mother and grandmother under different circumstances no doubt would have had circumcised. According to 1 Tim. iv. 14, young Timothy was formally consecrated and ordained to his important office. Just because of his descent, Jewish and Gentile, he was suitable for his office, forming, as it were, a connecting link between Jews and Gentiles, since he belonged to both.—Ver. 4. **The decrees.** Comp. xv. 22 sqq. **For to keep.** For their observance. These decrees they **delivered** orally and perhaps also in a written form; hence they were not intended merely for those to whom they were addressed in the first place (xv. 23).—Ver. 6. **Asia.** The Roman province of that name. (Comp. vi. 9).—Ver. 7. **Mysia.** A part of the province of Asia. **Spirit of Jesus.** Comp. John xv. 26; Luke xxiv. 49; Rom. viii. 9.—Ver. 8. **Troas.** Built by two of the successors of Alexander the Great and called in his honor Alexandria Troas; the name Troas was to remind one of ancient Troy, which, however, was situated some distance

further north.—Ver. 9. **A vision.** Such as Paul had often. (Comp. xviii. 9; xxiii. 11; xxvii. 23; 2 Cor. xii. 1 sqq.)—Ver. 10. **We endeavoured.** Here Luke joined Paul on the journey, as the “*we*” shows. (Comp. Introductory Remarks.)

### (B.) PAUL AT PHILIPPI.

11–40. Setting sail therefore from Troas, we made a straight course to Samothrace, and the day following to Neapolis; and from thence to Philippi, which is a city of Macedonia, the first of the district, a *Roman* colony: and we were in this city tarrying certain days. And on the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which were come together. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And she constrained us.

And it came to pass, as we were going to the place of prayer, that a certain maid having a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying. The same following after Paul and us cried out, saying, These men are servants of the Most High God, which proclaim unto you the way of salvation. And this she did for many days. But Paul, being sore troubled, turned and said to the spirit, I charge thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And it came out that very hour.

But when her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone, they laid hold on Paul and Silas, and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers, and when they had brought them unto the magistrates, they said, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and set forth customs which it is not lawful for us to receive, or to observe, being Romans. And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent their garments off them, and commanded to beat them with rods. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: who, having received such a charge, cast them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns unto God, and the prisoners were listening to them; and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison-house were shaken: and

immediately all the doors were opened ; and every one's bands were loosed. And the jailor being roused out of sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, drew his sword, and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm : for we are all here. And he called for lights, and sprang in, and, trembling for fear, fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved ? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house. And they spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes ; and was baptized, he and all his, immediately. And he brought them up into his house, and set meat before them, and rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God.

But when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go. And the jailor reported the words to Paul, *saying*, The magistrates have sent to let you go : now therefore come forth, and go in peace. But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men that are Romans, and have cast us into prison ; and do they now cast us out privily ? nay verily ; but let them come themselves and bring us out. And the serjeants reported these words unto the magistrates : and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans ; and they came and besought them ; and when they had brought them out, they asked them to go away from the city. And they went out of the prison, and entered into *the house of Lydia* : and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

Having set sail from Troas, Paul and his companions in a straight northwesterly direction came to the island of Samothrace, and on the second day landed at Neapolis in Thrace, the seaport for Philippi (11), and then went to the latter city where they stayed for some time (12). The number of Jews seems to have been small at this place, and these probably even were without a synagogue. Hence Paul and his assistants on the sabbath day went out to a river side where they expected to find a place for prayer, either a slight structure or only an open space set apart for that sacred purpose, usually near a water course for the sake of the frequent ceremonial washings of the Jews also in connection with prayer. (Comp. my Brief Comm. on Matt. xv. 2.) And

they were not disappointed, but found such a place and a number of women of whom the Jewish congregation there seems to have mainly consisted, and immediately began to teach them the way to heaven (13). Among these women there was a certain Lydia from Thyatira, a city of Asia Minor renowned for its purple dyes and fabrics. She may have been at Philippi on account of her trade, and being a proselyte of the gate, she also listened to what Paul had to say; and by the grace of God, always, though not irresistibly, connected with His Word, she paid the proper attention and opened her heart to the glad tidings of salvation (14). Hence, faith was kindled in her, and she was baptized with her whole family; and then she so urgently requested Paul and his companions to stay with her for some time that they could not refuse her (15).

When Paul and his companions went to the place of prayer they were met by a female slave possessed by a soothsaying demon, who by her soothsaying was a means of great income to her owners (16). She now followed Paul and his assistants, proclaiming their position and work; but Paul, having, for some reason unknown to us, suffered this to go on for a considerable time, at last, troubled and provoked by the unceasing cry of the demon, in imitation of the example set by Christ Himself and by the authority given by Him to His servants (Mark i. 34; xvi. 17), commanded the wicked spirit to leave his human abode, which he also had to do forthwith (17 sq.). This, however, exasperated the owners of the slave, deprived, as they now were, of their income from her, and in consequence they laid hold of the two principal actors, Paul and Silas, and dragged them first before the civil magistrates, and then, when these perhaps declined to do anything in the matter, before the Roman police officers,

claiming that these despised and hated Jews were troubling Roman citizens by trying to introduce religious customs contrary to those sanctioned by law (19-21). At the same time the crowd, always easily excited, arose against them, and the police officers, in turn complying with the popular clamor, without any examination of the case at once commanded them to be stripped and beaten, and then had them incarcerated by an obsequious jailer as the worst of criminals (22-24). But in their joy at being counted worthy of suffering shame and pain for the Gospel of their Saviour, Paul and Silas in the quiet of midnight sang hymns of praise to God, so that the other prisoners heard them (25). And God publicly and unmistakably acknowledged them to be His messengers by a sudden miraculous earthquake that shook the very foundations of the prison; and the same supernatural power opened the doors of the prison and loosed the fetters of all the prisoners (26). The jailer, awakened by the noise and supposing that those for whom he was responsible with his own life had escaped, held self-inflicted death preferable to the punishment and disgrace awaiting him (27). But Paul, perceiving his suicidal intentions, called out to him that there was no necessity for his rash action, no prisoner having dared to make use of the miraculous occurrence for selfish ends (28). Having then with lights examined everything carefully, and remembering that Paul and Silas had claimed to be messengers of the only true God, sent to show men the way of eternal salvation, the jailer in awe and reverence fell at their feet (29), led them out of their dungeon, and respectfully asked them what was necessary unto his salvation (30). Their answer, of course, was that putting his whole confidence in Jesus as also his Lord and Saviour was the only means of saving both himself and

family (31). And in order to enable them to come to this faith they more fully explained to them the saving truth of the Gospel (32). And in that very night the jailer not only did the apostles the service of washing them of their bloody stripes, but received at their hands the far greater service of being, together with his whole family, by the washing of regeneration in holy baptism, made a happy member of the kingdom of God (33). His grateful appreciation of this he showed by taking them out of the prison department, up into his own dwelling, and setting before them refreshments, he and his whole family rejoicing that they had been led to become believers in the true God, the only Saviour of sin-lost man (34). On the following morning the Roman officers, either having considered the matter more impartially and carefully, or having learned of the miraculous occurrences in the prison, sent their official servants to the jailer commanding him to set the two abused men free (35). When the jailer announced this to them (36), Paul, for the sake of the new congregation that was not to suffer on account of undeserved shame of its founders, demanded that the officers, after having maltreated them publicly and in violation of the common and especially Roman law, should now publicly and in person recognize their perfect innocence, and not let them go as pardoned criminals or fugitives from the law (37). The announcement that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, and as such entitled to special privileges that had to be respected by every official, among them the exemption from scourging (38), made such an impression upon the officers that they came in person, begged the apostles to be satisfied with these amends, led them out of the prison, and asked them to leave the city, so as to avoid further trouble (39). This Paul and Silas did, leaving, however,



as it would seem, their assistants there ; but before leaving the city they went to the house of Lydia and exhorted the new Christians assembled there to remain steadfast in the faith (40).

Ver. 11. **Neapolis.** Formerly Datos, opposite the island of Thasos, 12 miles south of Philippi.—Ver. 12. **Philippi.** Founded by and named after Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, the first city reached in that part of Macedonia, and at the same time a Roman colony with all the privileges of such a one, now a small village called Filiba. **The first,** etc. For him who, as Paul did, came into Macedonia from the east. The *capital* of this eastern district of Macedonia was, not Philippi, but Amphipolis. Æmilius Paulus had subjected Macedonia to Roman rule and divided it into four districts. The words of our text may be translated thus, *which is the first city of the part, or district, of Macedonia, a colony,* Instead of *the part* we should indeed expect *this part* ; but the former expression may mean *the part in question*, the eastern district. *First* is emphatic, and shows that Paul, being called to Macedonia, began his activity in the very first city of this country into which he came, Neapolis belonging to Macedonia only since the reign of emperor Vespasian. **Certain.** Several.—Ver. 13. **Without.** Out of, outside of. **A river side.** There are several small rivers near. **Sat down.** As teachers used to do (Matt. v. 1 ; Luke iv. 20). **Women.** Married, perhaps, to Gentiles (comp. 1), or, in part, proselytes themselves. Some suppose that this place of worship was intended only for women ; but then it would have been considered improper for Paul and his companions to go there. (Comp. also John iv. 27.)—Ver. 14. **Lydia.** May mean, *the Lydian*, since Thyatira was, according to Ptolemy, a city of Lydia ; but *Lydia* was already at that time a common

name for women, and the expression **named**, lit. *by name*, would scarcely be added if the name were simply meant to indicate the country whence she came. **Purple**. The coloring matter, or more likely the fabric already dyed. **Thyatira**. Among the ruins of this city an old inscription has been found mentioning the guild of dyers. The city was situated on the confines of Lydia and Mysia; it contained later one of the seven churches to whom John was directed to address letters (Rev. ii. 18 sqq.). **Worshipped God**. Comp. xiii. 16. **Heard us**. Lit. *heard*, hearkened, listened attentively and assiduously (Imperfect). **Whose heart the Lord opened**. She felt the inevitable, though not irresistible, motions and impulses of divine converting grace, always felt when the Word is heard as Lydia heard it, and as natural man can hear it; and as she did not wilfully resist the operation of this grace, her heart was opened, she became more and more receptive, was led forward step by step until faith was kindled in her heart. This opening of the heart was a work of divine grace, as it always is, but of divine grace that always can be resisted effectively whilst, at the same time, it confers the ability to suffer its operations to go on; hence, *man* can also be said to open his heart (Rev. iii. 20). *Transitive* conversion, i. e. the converting operation of divine grace, is always the first in its respective stages, but is followed immediately by *intransitive* conversion, i. e. the corresponding state and conduct of man, stage by stage. The latter is only the other, human, side of the former, absolutely dependent on it as its only cause, but capable of being suppressed and undone at once by wilful resistance. Transitive conversion never enters upon a new stage until intransitive conversion has followed it in the preceding stage. When God through His Word opens the heart, man

must suffer it to be and remain open before he can, in the proper, salutary sense, *give heed unto those things* which are contained in the Word and thus be led to faith. Receptivity for the Word of God, or an open heart, is no man's by nature ; God must give it to him, create it in him, by His grace and power contained in the Word. This receptivity, however, as we see here in the case of Lydia, is not yet faith. Conversion is a process, having its stages, though the length of time necessary for each stage differs with different persons. Transition from the state of sin and damnation to that of forgiveness and salvation, or from spiritual death to spiritual life, is, however, instantaneous, taking place at that very moment when man in faith lays hold of the righteousness of Christ and appropriates it, though this moment is reached only gradually. Here, in the case of Lydia, a longer instruction seems to have preceded baptism and full faith, since it is stated that she had her heart opened to give heed to those things *that were being spoken* by Paul. (Comp. also 18.)—Ver. 15. **Her household.** Containing doubtless also children. (Comp. 33 ; 1 Cor. i. 16.) Baptism, taking in the New Testament economy the place of Old Testament circumcision (Col. ii. 11 sq.), must antecedently be supposed to be intended also for infants, and, as a sacrament of the New Testament, for all infants, female as well as male ; if not intended for infants also, these would have less in the New Testament than they had in the Old, which is a preposterous supposition. And if baptism were not intended also for infants, the New Testament would have to say so directly and expressly, just because, for the reasons mentioned, it must be assumed to be for them also. But the examples of the baptism of whole families, where it is only natural to presuppose the presence of infants,

confirm, and cannot but confirm, the supposition that infants were meant to be, and were, baptized. Moreover, the words of the institution of baptism (Matt. xxviii. 19 sq.), mentioning *baptizing* first, and then *teaching*, evidently refer to the condition of the *planted* Church where the baptism of *infants* is to be the rule and hence to precede the teaching, whilst in *planting* a church, or in missionary activity, as a matter of course and as shown by the example of the apostles, the baptizing of *adults*, preceded by teaching, is the first thing to be done. For, in making disciples, *baptizing* and *teaching* must be combined, the *order* of these two activities being determined by the condition of the person that is to be made a disciple. As a matter of course, an adult is first to be taught, at least so far that he knows what baptism is, and then to be baptized; and no infant is to be baptized concerning whom we cannot have the human assurance that afterwards it will be taught. Hence, infant baptism can only follow the baptism of adults, and in the description of missionary activity, as in the Acts, the mention of the baptism of *adults* is to be expected first of all, the baptism of *infants* being only a natural consequence and sequel of the former. In the same manner the assertion of our Lord, "*Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*" (John iii. 5), and that of Paul that baptism is "*the washing of regeneration*" (Tit. iii. 5), both making *baptism the ordinary and regular means of regeneration*, whilst the Gospel is such a means just as well (James i. 18; Rom. x. 17, etc.), presuppose *infant* baptism as the rule in the Church, since in the case of adults baptism is intended to be merely the seal of that regeneration that has already been brought about by the Word and that always is identical with the kindling of faith, which faith is to pre-

cede the baptism of adults. (Comp. Rom. iv. 11.) Consequently, the New Testament, the Acts included, is not hostile nor indifferent to infant baptism; on the contrary, both what it says and does not say presupposes infant baptism as a matter of course in the Church. And the Church, as its history shows, has, in its overwhelming majority and its most eminent teachers and representatives, always regarded it so, from the age of the apostles down to our own times. **If ye have judged me**, etc. This judgment had already been passed by admitting her to baptism; but she wanted it supplemented and confirmed by the apostles taking up their abode with her for some time, considering this as a manifest testimonial of her true and full membership in the Church. **Faithful to**, or, and perhaps better, *trusting*, or *believing*, *in*. **She constrained us**. By her entreaties. (Comp. Luke xxiv. 29.) This is to show, not the unwillingness of the apostles, but her urgency and fervor that had its source in her gratitude for what God had done for her. This gratitude was her primary motive, the testimony in her favor only a secondary object; gratitude to God influenced her, regard for her was to influence the apostles. Without her urgent entreaties Paul, according to his principles (xx. 33 sq.; 1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8), would not have stayed with her, but would have worked for his support.—Ver. 16. **As we were going**. Every time when they were on their way. **A spirit of divination**. Lit. *a spirit, a python*. Python was in Greek mythology “the name of the Pythian serpent or dragon that dwelt in the region of Pytho at the foot of Parnassus in Phocis, and was said to have guarded the oracle of Delphi and been slain by Apollo” (GRIMM-THAYER); then it denoted in general *a spirit of divination*, later also *a ventriloquist*. The second signification fits best

here. *Python* is an explanatory apposition to *spirit*: the spirit that possessed her was a spirit of divination, i. e. a demon that enabled her to know and reveal things that were beyond merely human knowledge but could be known, or guessed, by a higher spirit. That spirits, good and bad, are superior to man in his fallen condition, both in intellect and experience, stands to reason and is apparent from what we read concerning them in the Scriptures; as also that they can communicate their knowledge to man. But they cannot, of course, know or predict *contingent* events, i. e. such as cannot be determined by any known rule or law, unless God first reveal these to them, which naturally, as a rule, He will not do in the case of fallen spirits. (Comp. Matt. iv. 24.) **Her masters.** Perhaps brothers. What she earned by her soothsaying belonged to her masters, she being a slave.—Ver. 17. **Cried.** Continually (Imperfect). **These men are servants,** etc. Comp. Mark i. 34; iii. 11 sq. “This testimony on the part of the evil spirit which possessed the unhappy slave-girl to the work and power of Christ and His servants, Paul and Silas, was by no means an unusual incident in the early days of Christianity. On several occasions, during the public ministry of the Lord Jesus, had these devils borne loud and public testimony to His majesty and power; they had not only obeyed His voice, and freed their poor victims from their presence, but had, apparently of their own free will, borne witness to the veiled glory of the unknown teacher, declaring now that He was the Holy One of God, and at another time the Son of God. It is observable that neither Christ nor His servants would ever accept this testimony from demons.” (*Pop. Comm.*) **Servants.** Bondservants who do nothing but His will. **Most High God.** In comparison with those that are called gods in a

wider sense (e. g. John x. 34 sq. ; Psalm lxxxii. 6 ; 2 Cor. iv. 4 ; Phil. iii. 19), or are only creatures of the imagination (e. g. Psalm cxv. 4 sqq. ; 1 Cor. viii. 4). **Which.** Men whose office and occupation it is.—Ver. 18. **Charge.** Command, order. **In the name of Jesus Christ.** Comp. iii. 6.—Ver. 19. **Gone.** Lit. *come out*, together with the demon. **Market-place.** A place where men assemble, whether for the sale of commodities (e. g. Mark vii. 4), or for the transaction of other public business, as here ; the public place or square, the forum.—Ver. 20. **Magistrates, Prætors,** as the two highest Roman magistrates in colonial cities were called. The apostles were charged with offending against *Roman* laws. **Do exceedingly trouble.** Bring into great confusion or agitation.—Ver. 21. **Set forth.** Promulgate, proclaim publicly. **Customs.** Of a religious nature. **Being Romans.** The religion preached by the apostles is represented as being hostile to the religious customs sanctioned by Roman law ; and to introduce such a religion was considered a grievous misdemeanor. The emphasis laid on the Jewish nationality of Paul and Silas perhaps had something to do with the edict of Claudius mentioned xviii. 2, as also with the small number of Jews at Philippi (comp. 13), which made their conduct appear the more unjustifiable and arrogant.—Ver. 22. **The magistrates.** Intimidated by the rabble and endeavoring to pacify them by doing something. **Rent.** Commanded the lictors to do so. (Comp. Matt. xxvii. 26 ; Mark xv. 15.) The upper part of the body was made bare for the scourging. The whole procedure was so tumultuous and violent that Paul and Silas could not now protest as they did afterwards. (Comp. 37.)—Ver. 23. **When they had laid.** The magistrates, but of course by the lictors. **Stripes.** Blows.—Ver. 24. **The inner prison.** “In a Roman prison there were

usually three distinct parts—(1) the *communiōra*, where the prisoners had light and fresh air; (2) the *interiora*, shut off by strong iron gates with bars and locks; (3) the *tullianum* or dungeon. The third was a place rather of execution or for one condemned to die. The prison in which Paul and Silas lay that eventful night at Philippi was probably a damp cold cell from which light was excluded. The **stocks** alluded to was an instrument of torture as well as confinement. This instrument was a heavy piece of wood with holes, into which the feet were placed in such a manner that they were stretched widely apart so as to cause the sufferer great pain." (*Pop. Comm.*) All this was done to prevent the escape of the apostles, though with unnecessary severity and cruelty.—Ver. 25. Comp. v. 41. **Were praying**, etc. Lit. *in praying sang the praise of God*, and this for quite a while (Imperfect).—Ver. 26. Comp. iv. 31.—Ver. 28. **Paul**. Hearing perhaps the lamentations and remonstrances of the terrified family. (Comp. 33 sq.) **We are all here**. The other prisoners being miraculously held, or in their surprise not daring to flee, moved perhaps also by the example of Paul and Silas. Paul knew that no one had fled, for he would have heard it if it had been otherwise. **Here**. In the prison, not in Paul's cell.—Ver. 29. **Lights**. In order to have the whole prison lighted and examined. **Trembling for fear**. Regarding Paul and Silas as the messengers of that God who had wrought the miracle, and conscious of having been instrumental in maltreating them.—Ver. 30. **Saved**. He had heard of their preaching and reputation. (Comp. 17.)—Ver. 31. Comp. Rom. i. 16; iii. 28. Faith is the only way and condition of salvation. **And thy house**. Presupposing that his family will join him in faith, which presupposition was fulfilled, as the following verses show.—Ver. 33. **He**



**took them.** Out of the prison, most likely to the basin or tank, called the *impluvium*, in those times usually found in the court of the house. There the baptism doubtless also took place, either by aspersion or immersion. (Comp. ii. 41.) **And all his.** Comp. 15. **Immediately.** Emphatic; they lost no time in using the means of salvation.—Ver. 34. **Up.** His apartments being, it seems, situated above the prison proper. **With all his house.** May belong to what follows, *having believed in God with his whole house*; that was the cause of his great joy that not only he had become a believer in the true God, but that his whole family had joined him in this. **Having believed.** Lit. *having become a believer* and now living in that happy state and condition.—Ver. 35. **Serjeants.** Lictors, lit. *those that carried the rods*, or fasces, before the magistrates, as insignia of their authority. **Let those men go.** Contemptuously, as also in fear of having gone too far; and wishing that the matter may end thus and cause no further trouble.—Ver. 36. **Come forth.** Lit. *go out*, viz. of the prison building. **Go in peace.** Comp. xv. 33.—Ver. 37. **Unto them.** To the jailer and the lictors. **Romans.** By a special Roman law a Roman citizen was exempt from the disgraceful punishment of being beaten, flogged or scourged. That Silas was a Roman citizen is stated here only; as to Paul, comp. xxii. 28; xxv. 10 sqq. **Cast us out.** Eager to get rid of us and further responsibility as to our treatment. **Privily.** Lest what had taken place should become known still more; perhaps also that Paul and Silas might appear to have fled, thereby acknowledging their guilt.—Ver. 38. **Feared.** That they would be severely punished themselves for disregarding what the Romans considered the greatest dignity and privilege a man could enjoy.—Ver. 39. **Besought them.**

Repeatedly and earnestly (Imperfect), as also humbly. What a change compared with their former conduct (22 sq.)!—Ver. 40. **They . . . departed.** Viz. Paul and Silas, without Luke, since the latter no more speaks in the first person plural (comp. 10); whether Timothy accompanied them (comp. 1 sqq.), we do not know, though it is probable (comp. xvii. 14). Those that stayed at Philippi took care of the young Christian congregation there.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### (A.) PAUL AND SILAS AT THESSALONICA AND BERCEÆ.

1-15. Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews : and Paul, as his custom was, went in unto them, and for three sabbath days reasoned with them from the scriptures, opening and alleging, that it behoved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead ; and that this Jesus, whom, *said he*, I proclaim unto you, is the Christ. And some of them were persuaded, and consorted with Paul and Silas ; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few. But the Jews, being moved with jealousy, took unto them certain vile fellows of the rabble, and gathering a crowd, set the city on an uproar ; and assaulting the house of Jason, they sought to bring them forth to the people. And when they found them not, they dragged Jason and certain brethren before the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also ; whom Jason hath received : and these all act contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, *one* Jesus. And they troubled the multitude and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. And when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berceæ : who when they were come thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether these things were so. Many of them therefore believed ; also of the Greek women of honourable estate, and of men, not a few. But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was proclaimed of Paul at Berceæ also, they came thither likewise, stirring up and troubling the multitudes. And then immediately the brethren sent forth Paul to go as far as to the sea : and Silas and Timothy abode there still. But they that conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens : and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timothy that they should come to him with all speed, they departed.

Going along the great Egnation road in a westerly

direction, Paul and Silas first came to Amphipolis, then to Apollonia, and finally to Thessalonica, where they found a synagogue (1). Having the custom of attending the synagogue worship in order to have an opportunity of preaching the Gospel, Paul on three sabbaths had discourses with the Jews on the basis of the Old Testament Scriptures (2), explaining them and showing that, contrary to Jewish expectation, the Messiah had to suffer even death and then to rise again from the dead, and that this Messiah was none other than Jesus of Nazareth, as whose messenger he had come also to them (3). This had the effect that at least some of them permitted themselves to be led to Christ in faith and thus to become disciples of Paul and Silas, a sweet reward of their labor; and this was also the case with a great number of Greek proselytes, among them many women of wealth and rank (4). But the Jews in general became jealous of their success, and taking to themselves some bad men of the loafers of the place, they created a disturbance and an uproar in the city, suddenly appeared before the house of Jason, where the apostles stayed, and tried to bring them out to the people (5). But failing to find them, they dragged Jason himself and some other Christians before the judges of the city with the noisy cry that those men that had excited tumults everywhere were now at their nefarious work also in this city (6), and that Jason was their open friend and abettor, all of them being rebels against the emperor by proclaiming Jesus king in his stead (7). Thus they filled with fear and dread not only the common people but also the rulers of the city who knew well how jealous the emperor was of his authority (8), so that they released Jason and the rest only after these had given security for keeping the peace (9). But as there

was reason for apprehending further danger for Paul and Silas at the hands of the enraged Jews, their fellow-Christians in the next night already sent them off to Berœa, in a southwestern direction from Thessalonica. As soon as they had arrived there, nothing daunted by their recent sad experiences, they went to the synagogue of the place (10). And the Jews living here proved to be of a nobler character than those of Thessalonica, receiving the Gospel with the greatest eagerness, though not without daily comparing the Scriptures of the Old Testament and proving the teachings of Paul thereby (11). And the consequence was that many of them came to believe in Jesus the Christ, as was also the case with many proselytes of both sexes belonging to noble families, the women leading also here (12). But when the Thessalonian Jews heard of this, they persecuted the apostles even here, coming and disturbing the people (13). In consequence Paul, who seems to have been the special object of Jewish hatred, was forthwith sent by the Christians to the seacoast, whilst Silas and Timothy stayed at Berœa (14). The Berœan conductors of Paul brought him as far as Athens and then returned with the order for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible (15).

**Ver. 1. Amphipolis.** The capital of the first district of Macedonia, an Athenian colony, now merely a village. **Apollonia.** In the Macedonian province Mygdonia. **Thessalonica.** A flourishing commercial city at that time, capital of the second district of Macedonia, still an important place, the second in commerce in Turkey, counting among its numerous inhabitants (about 80,000) many thousands of Jews. The present name is Saloniki. **Where was a synagogue of the Jews.** The only one, it seems, in the city and in the vicinity. (Comp. xvi. 13.)—**Ver. 2. As his custom was.** Paul also herein was the

follower of his divine Master. (Luke iv. 16.) **Reasoned.** Lit. *conversed, discoursed, argued*, had a kind of dialogue with them, just as Jesus had done (John vi. 25 sqq.; Matt. xii. 9 sqq.; Luke iv. 16 sqq.), and which could be done also in a synagogue. **From the Scriptures.** Comp. Luke xxiv. 25 sqq.—Ver. 3. **I.** Emphatic. *He* was the person to tell them of this Jesus, being His official messenger. **Is the Christ.** According to the best attested reading the translation ought to be, *And that this is Christ Jesus whom I proclaim unto you*; others translate, *And that Jesus whom I proclaim is this Christ*. Observe the transition from indirect speech to direct (*oratio variata*).—Ver. 4. **Consorted with.** Lit. *were added, or assigned, by lot, allotted to*, viz. by God as disciples. **Devout Greeks.** Comp. xiii. 50. **A great multitude.** The proselytes were not so fanatical and prejudiced as the Jews, of whom only *some* were converted.—Ver. 5. **Being moved with jealousy.** Lit. *having become jealous*. **Vile fellows.** Lit. *bad, wicked men*. **Rabble.** Lit. *men that frequented the market place*, viz. as idlers. **Assaulting.** Lit. *suddenly appearing there*, of course with a hostile intention. **Jason.** As some think only the Greek form for the Hebrew *Jeshua*, or Joshua. (Comp. 2 Macc. i. 7; iv. 7 sqq.) He had received Paul and Silas as their host and friend. (Comp. xvi. 15.) **Sought.** Repeatedly and eagerly (Imperfect).—Ver. 6. **They found them not.** They had left the house, accidentally, or purposely, having heard of the designs of the Jews. **Rulers of the city.** Comp. xvi. 19. **Turned the world upside down.** Created tumult and seditions everywhere—a fanatical exaggeration.—Ver. 7. **These all.** Those present, Jason included, and those that had escaped. **The decrees of the emperor.** Asserting and guarding his authority as the only legitimate one. **King.** In the

wider sense including the emperor. (Comp. John xix. 15; 1 Pet. ii. 13;—John xviii. 33 sqq.)—Ver. 8. **Troubled.** Causing the fear of a rebellion on the part of the adherents of Jesus and the vengeance of the Roman emperor. (Comp. Matt. ii. 3.)—Ver. 9. **Security.** Most probably a sum of money deposited as a surety that nothing would be done against the Roman emperor.—Ver. 10. **Berœa.** A city in the third district of Macedonia, now Verria, or Kara-Verria, with about 10,000 inhabitants. **Went.** Lit. *went away*; perhaps the synagogue was situated outside of the city, on the bank of the river Haliacmon. (Comp. xvi. 13.)—Ver. 11. **Examining.** Comp. John v. 39. No teaching can be divine that is not in perfect harmony with the revelation of God already received; for God cannot be at variance with Himself. Hence a Christian that is divinely convinced of the scripturalness of the Catechism truths that he has learned will not be led astray by misinterpretations of difficult passages of Holy Writ; even when not able to refute them by showing the mistake in the interpretation, he can and will reject it because it is in conflict with the divine truth that he has become convinced of.—Ver. 12. **Of honourable estate.** Comp. xiii. 50. These Greek women and men, no doubt, at least in part were proselytes of the gate (comp. viii. 27); some of them may also have been Gentiles in the strictest sense. (Comp. xi. 20.) The former would be present in the synagogue; the latter could be gained in private conversation. **Women.** Comp. 4; xvi. 13.—Ver. 13. **Had knowledge.** Had come to know, had learned. **Likewise.** Can be, and probably should be, connected with the next words, *likewise stirring up*, etc. This was the *first* place whither they *went*; but they had been *stirring up*, etc., already at home (5 sqq.).—Ver. 14. **As far as to the sea.**

So as to be entirely out of the reach of his enemies. **Timothy.** Comp. xvi. 40. If he had been left at Philippi, he must have joined the apostle again, either here or already before. **Abode there still.** Stayed there to build the new congregation.—Ver. 15. **Should come to him,** etc. Comp. xviii. 5. According to 1 Thess. iii. 1 sqq., Paul seems to have later given Timothy orders to go back first to Thessalonica; and that may be the cause that Timothy and Silas did not join Paul at Athens, but at Corinth. **They departed.** Viz. for their home, returned to Bereæ.

### (B.) PAUL AT ATHENS.

16-34. Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him, as he beheld the city full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the market-place every day with them that met with him. And certain also of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, What would this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached Jesus and the resurrection. And they took hold of him, and brought him unto the Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new teaching is, which is spoken by thee? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. (Now all the Athenians and the strangers sojourning there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing.) And Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus, and said,

Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are somewhat superstitious. For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this set I forth unto you. The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and he made of one every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Being



then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man. The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent: inasmuch as he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; but others said, We will hear thee concerning this yet again. Thus Paul went out from among them. But certain men clave unto him, and believed: among whom also was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Whilst Paul was waiting at Athens for the arrival of his companions, grief and holy anger filled his heart to see the city full of idols, which was the case to such an extent that even heathen authors expressed their astonishment at it (16). Hence he did what he could to bring about a salutary change, conversing and arguing with the Jews and the proselytes in the synagogue on the sabbath and with whomsoever he chanced to meet in the market place daily (17). While thus engaged he was also accosted by members of those two philosophic sects whose tenets were in most direct opposition to Christianity, by Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. Some of them simply ridiculed him as a man that was talking without knowing perhaps what he was talking about, whilst others, hearing him speak of the glad tidings that Jesus is the Saviour of mankind and will at last even raise the dead, regarded him as the herald of gods hitherto unknown in Athens (18). Hence they led him in a familiar manner upon the hill where their highest court held its sessions, and where he could speak to a great multitude without being disturbed by the noisy throng of the market place, and asked him to let them know the real contents and import of the new and strange preaching they were hearing (19 sq.). And this was entirely in accordance with the

well-known character of the inhabitants of Athens, whether natives or strangers, to have leisure for nothing else than conversing about the latest news (21). Without any timidity or hesitancy Paul took his stand in the midst of the crowd surrounding him, and, after an introduction calculated to gain their good will and attention, spoke to them of *God*, of *man*, and of *Jesus*, the divinely-appointed Mediator between both. In the first place he gave expression to his joyous surprise to find the Athenians in every respect paying more attention to religious matters than their countrymen did—a praise bestowed upon them also by other writers (22). For, passing through their city and examining the various objects of their worship, he had also found an altar dedicated to *an unknown god*. The Athenians, namely, as we see also from occasional notices in other writers, would seem to have had the custom of offering sacrifices in times of special calamities not only to the gods usually worshipped by them, but also to the unknown god that might be the real cause of their distress. Hereby they acknowledged that there was, or at least might be, some divine being unknown to them. And of this Divine Being, worshipped by them without knowing Him, Paul was speaking to them (23). He is, indeed, not like unto their supposed gods, limited in time and power, but the eternal Creator of all that exists besides Himself, and therefore the Supreme Lord and Master of the whole world, and not a being that in any way can be enclosed in temples made by men (24). Nor is He in need of any service man can render Him, being Himself the very one that gives to all men life in its beginning and continuation, and all they need and have (25). Such is the true *God*, over against the fictitious gods of the heathen. And as to *men*, they have their origin in the first man

made by this true God; and it is owing to His will and ordination that the descendants of this first man cover the face of the whole earth, He having determined both the time and the place of their living and flourishing and doing their appointed work here on earth (26). And it is His intention that this His manifest government of the human race should move them to seek for Him, as much as they can in their fallen condition, and to find Him, at least to some extent; which cannot be deemed impossible or difficult, as He, after the creation, did not withdraw His presence from the works of His hands (27), but, on the contrary, solely to His all-surrounding presence every one owes not only his life as a man, but even his power of moving, as we to some extent find it in plants, in water, and the like, yea, his very existence. That this knowledge of God is not impossible for natural man is seen from the writings of Greek poets, one of them even declaring that men are the offspring of God (28). If this poet and others that assert the same thing are right, as they are, when understood correctly, man having been created in the image of God, we certainly ought not to suppose, as the heathen, the Athenians included, have done, that the Deity is in any way like unto the statues of precious metal or stone that man has made by his art and in accordance with his ideas and musings (29). These times of past ignorance in the heathen world God, however, has overlooked without inflicting well-deserved punishment; but as regards the present, He wants every man without exception to turn away from such sinful idolatry to the service of the true God (30), inasmuch as He has determined on the last day to judge the whole world in accordance with the state and condition of every one, condemning and punishing all that have rejected the true God and His service; and this He will

do by a man appointed by Him, having furnished to every one the possibility and the strongest motive of believing in Him as the Redeemer and Judge of the world by raising Him from the dead and thus proving Him to be what He claimed to be (31). When Paul had gotten so far in his address, having not even yet mentioned the name of *Jesus*, his hearers could no longer listen to him: the idea of a resurrection from the dead seemed too preposterous and ridiculous to them, some openly ridiculing it, others in a more polite manner giving Paul to understand that they were no longer interested in what he had to say (32). Under these circumstances he could not but leave them (33). His labor in Athens, however, was not altogether in vain: some at least joined the Church of Christ, among them one of the foremost men of the city, Dionysius, a member of the highest court, and a woman by the name of Damaris (34).

Ver. 16. **Athens.** "The once famous centre of Greek thought and culture, long the dominant power among the varied states of which ancient Greece was made up, whose name and influence at one time was all-powerful in so many rich and flourishing cities round the Mediterranean Coast, in Asia as well as in Europe, had become after many vicissitudes a simple provincial city of the province of Achaia in the empire. Rome, in memory of its past splendid history, had accorded it the privileges of a 'free city,' *urbs libera*. . . . The whole aspect of Athens was strangely repugnant" (?) "to Paul; the great cities he was acquainted with, such as Antioch in the east and Thessalonica in the west, were busy commercial centres, full of life and energy, despising rather, while at the same time practising, idolatry. Indifferentism was what he had been combating, rather than anything like a fervid spirit of idolatry; but here he *seemed*

in a different atmosphere, here idolatry was closely bound up with all the pleasures and the occupations of the citizens, was linked indissolubly with the memories of the past of which the people of Athens were so proud. . . . The epithet " (**full of idols**) " certainly seems to have been singularly appropriate. Other writers, writing of Athens in a different spirit to Paul, could not help noticing this striking peculiarity in the city. Petronius remarks satirically how at Athens one could find a god easier than a man. Another writes how it was almost impossible for one to make his way through these idols. Pausanias states how Athens had more images than all the rest of Greece put together. Xenophon's expression is the strongest when he calls Athens 'one great altar, one great offering to the gods.' Livy's remark is also noteworthy: 'In Athens are to be seen images of gods and men of all descriptions and made of all materials.' " - (*Popular Commentary*.) Ver. 17. **Devout persons.** Comp. xiii. 50. **In the market place.** Either the only one, as was the rule in Greek cities, or the old renowned one, situated near the Acropolis and the Areopagus, rich in beautiful statues, and the centre of the commercial, judicial, and philosophical life of the city. **Met with him.** Lit. *chanced to be present, met him by chance.*—Ver. 18. **Epicurean and Stoic philosophers.** The *Epicureans* were a philosophic sect, founded by Epicurus (born in Samos, 342 B. C.). "The Epicureans, while admitting the existence of gods, regarded them as paying no attention to men and the affairs of this world. They believed in no providence, in no accountability, in neither reward nor retribution in the life to come. They were virtually atheists. The real teaching of the masters of the sect was, that a man should enjoy to the uttermost the things of this life; for the soul, being material, was

annihilated after death." (*Pop. Comm.*) The *Stoics* were a philosophic sect founded by Zeno, who, a Cyprian by birth, taught at Athens about 300 B. C. "These were pantheists: they denied any overruling providence, or, in fact, any interference on the part of Deity in the affairs of the world. Everything was governed by an iron destiny, to which 'God' Himself was subject. They believed only in the immortality of the soul by imagining it was ultimately absorbed in Deity; but even this absorption they seemed to teach was only to be the lot of the wise and the good. The ideal life, however, proposed to the disciples of Zeno was a far higher one than the Epicurean ideal; a proud self-denial, and austere apathy (*ἀταραξία*), untouched by human passion, unmoved alike by joy and sorrow, was aimed at by the true Stoic." (*Pop. Comm.*) **Encountered him.** Met him, fought or disputed with him. **Babbler.** Empty talker, "who *picks up* bits of news and information and retails them to others." Originally used of birds, *seed-gatherer*, especially the crow or daw that picks up grain in the field. **Setter forth.** Announcer, proclaimer. **Gods.** Deities, divinities. This is the plural denoting the class, naturally used by the polytheistic Athenians, though Paul had spoken only of Jesus as a divine being. Some, however, conclude that the Greek word translated by resurrection (*Anastasis*) was also regarded as the name of a deity.—Ver. 19. **Took hold of him.** Comp. ix. 27; xxiii. 19. In a friendly, familiar manner they took him by the hand, to lead him to a place where their conversation would not be disturbed. The scene is neither judicial, as if Paul had been tried by the court, nor a mocking imitation of such a trial, there being not the slightest indication of either. **What.** As to its *contents*.—Ver. 20. **Mean.** Lit. *want to be*, are intended to mean, may mean.—Ver.

21. **Strangers sojourning there.** The spirit was catching, was, so to say, in the air, being a characteristic of Athens. **Some new things.** Lit. *something newer*, viz. than what they knew so far, the very latest news.—Ver. 22. **Men.** Comp. ii. 22. **Perceive.** Behold with surprise. **Somewhat superstitious.** Lit. *more god-fearing*, viz. than others. The Greek word used here may be taken in a good sense, viz.—*pious, religious*, or in a bad one, viz.—*superstitious*. If Paul did not purposely choose a word that could express both ideas, which we think he did in entire harmony with the state of affairs, he certainly did not mean to begin his speech by upbraiding, and thus repelling, his hearers, and hence used the word in its good sense.—Ver. 23. **To an unknown God.** Something similar is found also in other heathen religions, and is possible, yea probable, and intelligible in every heathen religion, since each one is simply a guess in so far as it purports to answer the question who is to be considered and worshipped as divine, and hence is never sure whether that divine being which in the special case can be expected to help has been recognized and worshipped. As to Athens, Philostratus, who wrote A. D. 244, expressly says that there were altars erected to unknown gods, and Diogenes Laertius (about 275 A. D.) relates “how, when once the Athenians were afflicted with a pestilence, Epimenides stayed the plague by sending white and black sheep from the Areopagus, and then sacrificing them on the various spots in the city where they lay down, to the unknown god who sent the pestilence. Therefore, this writer added, there are at Athens *nameless altars*” (*Pop. Comm.*). I. Emphatic. Paul was the man to tell them of this God whom they did not know, being sent by Him for this very purpose.—Ver. 24. **He.** Emphatic, in opposition to idols. Only He who created the world can

be its Lord and Ruler; and He cannot be confined in human structures, however grand and costly they may be. (Comp. 1 Kings viii. 27.)—Ver. 25. **Needed.** In addition to what He is and has Himself. **Breath.** The continuance of life, effected by breathing.—Ver. 26. **Of one.** Viz. man; some copies add, *blood*. This in opposition to the opinion of the Athenians and other heathen nations that they were *autochthones*, i. e. had sprung from the soil of the country they dwelt in, entirely independent of all other men.—Ver. 27. **If haply.** Lit. *if in consequence*. **Feel after him.** As when a blind person gropes after what he desires to find. More a man in his natural condition, being in reality blind in spiritual matters, cannot do; but this he can and should do, as it is the will and intention of his Creator, though in his fallen condition it is doubtful whether he will attain the desired end. (Comp. Rom. i. 19 sq.) The natural revelation that is without man, in the creation surrounding him, and within man, in the law engraved in his heart and his conscience, should urge him to feel, grope, and seek for the true God; and if he does not do it he is inexcusable. But without the special help of God, in His supernatural revelation, man will not, and cannot, succeed fully, as we see in the case of the wisest heathen philosophers. We may, however, be sure that God will grant the light of supernatural revelation to every one that uses aright the light of natural revelation, though we are not able to point this out in every individual case. Of course, we do not mean to say that following the light of nature is in any way, or to any extent, a merit before God that, as such, moves Him to grant more light and grace; but we mean to say that God encourages and blesses every honest, though weak and sin-defiled, effort to find Him in the way opened by Him to every



natural man, viz. natural revelation—a belief expressly sanctioned here by St. Paul. **Though he is not far from each one of us.** Comp. Jer. xxiii. 23. These words are explained by the next verse.—Ver. 28. **We live, and move, and have our being.** A descending climax, showing what all we owe to God and His presence. **Your own poets**; e. g. Aratus (about 270 B. C.), Cleanthes (the same time), and Pindar (about 500 B. C.). The words cited form the first half of a hexameter of Aratus. We see from this that Paul had at least some knowledge of Greek literature (comp. 1 Cor. xv. 33; Titus i. 12); his education was, of course, mainly Jewish (comp. xxii. 3). But his being born and brought up as a child at Tarsus (comp. ix. 11) fitted him especially for missionary activity among Gentiles. **For we are also his offspring.** Closely related to Him and entirely dependent on Him, owing our life and everything to Him as children to their father. (Comp. Gen. i. 26 sqq.)—Ver. 29. **We ought not**, etc. It degrades ourselves to have such ideas of God, much more is it unworthy of God. (Comp. Isa. xlv. 9 sqq.) **Gold, or silver**, etc. Such masterpieces of human art were to be seen everywhere at Athens. Paul here, of course, has reference to the heathen nations in general, not noticing the few exceptions formed by some philosophers who did not entertain these vulgar ideas of the deity.—Ver. 30. **Overlooked.** Comp. xiv. 16; Rom. iii. 25. **All everywhere.** No exception; no other way to heaven and salvation for any man, and this one intended and destined for every man.—Ver. 31. **Inasmuch.** In accordance with the fact that, etc. **The world.** Every inhabitant of the earth. **By the man.** Lit. *in a man*, viz. a man that is His representative, in whom God Himself appears and judges. (Comp. John v. 27.) **Whereof he has given**

**assurance.** Lit. *having offered, or afforded, faith.* (Comp. v. 31; Rom. i. 4.)—Ver. 32. **Some mocked.** Probably the Epicureans (18). **Others said,** etc. If these had been in earnest, really desiring to be further instructed, Paul would not have at once departed from Athens. (xviii. 1).—Ver. 34. **Clave unto him.** Joined themselves to him, became his disciples and fellows. (Comp. v. 13; ix. 26.) **Dionysius.** Tradition makes him bishop of Athens and a martyr; but nothing certain is known of his later life, though even writings, of a mystico-theosophical character and still extant, are ascribed to him. **Damaris.** Entirely unknown, though a tradition makes her the wife of Dionysius, which is not in accordance with the indefinite way in which she is mentioned here.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### (A.) PAUL AT CORINTH.

1-17. After these things he departed from Athens, and came to Corinth. And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a man of Pontus by race, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome: and he came unto them; and because he was of the same trade, he abode with them, and they wrought; for by their trade they were tentmakers. And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks.

But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was constrained by the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook out his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. And he departed thence, and went into the house of a certain man named Titus Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. And the Lord said unto Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee: for I have much people in this city. And he dwelt *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul, and brought him before the judgment-seat, saying, This man persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law. But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If indeed it were a matter of wrong or of wicked villany, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: but if they are questions about words and names and your own law, look to it yourselves; I am not minded to be a judge of these matters. And he drave them from the judgment-seat. And they all laid hold on Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment-seat. And Gallio cared for none of these things.

Having left Athens with its superstition and indiffer-

ence, Paul went westward to Corinth (1). Here he found a member of his own people, Aquila, born in the northeastern part of Asia Minor, but a resident of Rome until a decree of emperor Claudius had compelled him and his wife Priscilla to leave the city. To this married couple Paul went, either finding them already Christians or leading them to Christ (2), and lived and worked with them at their common trade, that of making tents out of goat's-hair cloth, as it would seem (3). According to his custom Paul began his preaching of the Gospel in the synagogue of the Jews, continuing it every sabbath, and thereby leading Jews and Gentiles to embrace the truth of salvation (4). And when his co-laborers Silas and Timothy had joined him again, he felt so encouraged and strengthened that he still more gave himself up to the preaching of the Gospel in the synagogue, solemnly announcing to his people that Jesus of Nazareth, and none other, is the Messiah promised them (5). But when they wilfully and stubbornly rejected the divine call to repentance and faith in Christ and even blasphemed the holy Word of God, he gave them to understand that hereby they had severed all connection with the messengers of God and the grace offered through them, and told them that no one but themselves would have to bear the responsibility for the eternal perdition that awaited them; he, having done all that in obedience to the instruction of Christ he could do, would now leave them to their self-chosen fate, and preach the Gospel rejected by them to the Gentiles (6). Hence, leaving the synagogue, he made the seat of his activity the house of a proselyte of the gate, by the name of Titus Justus, who lived in the immediate neighborhood (7). This resolute action of Paul made such an impression upon the chief officer of the synagogue, Crispus, that together with his whole

family he joined the Christians, as did also many other inhabitants of the city, hearing and believing the Word of God and being baptized (8). And Christ Himself in a vision at night encouraged His faithful servant to continue his preaching without any fear (9), since He, the Almighty Head of His Church, Himself would be with him, protecting him against every hostile attempt; and this because even in this most wicked place there were many that would suffer the grace of God to work repentance and faith in their hearts (10). And thus Paul continued his blessed work in safety for a year and a half (11). At that time Gallio, a brother of the renowned Stoic philosopher Seneca, himself a highly cultivated scholar and a liberal, popular man, was proconsul, or governor, of the Roman province Achaia. The Jews, exasperated by the hitherto undisturbed and highly successful activity of Paul, at length unanimously arose against him and brought him before the judgment-seat of the governor (12), charging him with leading men astray to a worship of God conflicting with the divine law given them (13). But Gallio, in his haughty religious indifference, did not even wait for Paul's defence. He told the Jews that he would consider himself in equity bound patiently to hear them, if what they had to say against this man were of the nature of an evil deed or a wicked piece of knavery (14); but since it was only the questions whether certain teachings were correct, whether Jesus was rightly called the Messiah and the Son of God, whether the Jewish law was still binding, and the like, he would have nothing to do with the whole matter, and they should settle it amongst themselves as best they could (15). And when they were not satisfied with this response, they were even compelled to leave the judgment-seat (16). This encouraged the heathen populace

to wreak their displeasure on the despised fanatical Jews by beating their leader Sosthenes, the successor or former colleague of Titius Justus, without any interference on the part of the governor who, in his aversion to all religious controversy and persecution, naturally sided with Paul (17).

Ver. 1. **Corinth.** "The Corinth which was so intimately connected with the life and work of Paul was a new city, comparatively speaking. The old city of the same name, so renowned in Grecian story, had been completely destroyed by the Roman Mummius, and for a hundred years the capital of the 'Achæan League' was left a heap of ruins. Its destruction was, indeed, so complete that it passed into a proverb. Some eighty-seven years before Paul's visit, Julius Cæsar rebuilt the fallen city and made it a 'Colonia'; and at this period it was a city of the second rank in the empire. The growth of the new city was strangely rapid; it soon surpassed its former opulence and splendor; it became a vast commercial centre, and was frequented by strangers from all parts. To a city so peopled, and possessing so great a trade, it can easily be believed that so many Jews were attracted. The laxity of the morals of Corinth has been frequently commented upon; writers tell us that there was, in this great and wicked city, one temple dedicated to Venus Pandemos, to which a thousand courtesans were attached." (*Popular Commentary*.) At Paul's time the city numbered about 200,000 inhabitants. Its destruction had taken place 146 B. C.—Ver 2. **Claudius.** Was emperor A. D. 41–54. In the latter years of his rule he issued a decree banishing for a time all the numerous Jews from Rome, because, as the Roman historian Suetonius tells us, they were constantly creating disturbances at the instigation of a certain Chrestos. Whether this

means that a man of that name, not uncommon among Greeks and Romans, was living then who led the tumultuous Jews, or that a quarrel among the Jews concerning Jesus Christ, or the Messiah in general, was the cause, we have no means of deciding. The former assumption would seem preferable, if heathens had not been so apt to misunderstand and misinterpret Jewish expressions and motives in religious matters—an experience that Christians also have always made with unbelievers undertaking to judge their doctrine and position. The fact that Aquila is here simply called a **Jew**, not a Jewish disciple, or the like, seems to indicate that so far he was not a baptized Christian, though perhaps not hostile to Christianity; but then we would expect to read that he and his wife were by Paul brought to faith in Christ and baptism.—Ver. 3. **Tentmakers**. Others take the word in the original to mean tent-cloth weavers. Every Jewish boy at that time was taught a trade, not excepting those that were intended for the life of a rabbi, or teacher, so as to make them independent of the good or ill will of their hearers. “Since the captivity, and the terrible misfortunes of the chosen people, the vicissitudes of life had taught the rabbis the stern necessity which existed for every Jewish boy to be able at least to earn his daily bread in the foreign cities where the chances of war or persecution might transport him. We read in the Talmud, ‘What is commanded of a father towards his sons? To circumcise him, to teach him the law, to teach him a trade.’ Rabbi Judah saith: ‘He that teacheth not his son a trade, teacheth him to be a thief.’ Rabban Gamaliel saith: ‘He that has a trade in his hand, to what is he like? He is like a vineyard that is fenced.’ Tentmaking was a common occupation in Paul’s native Cilicia. These tents were made of the

rough hair of the goats which abounded in the Cilician hill country. It was a well-known trade in the markets of the Levant. This tent-cloth was generally known as 'Cilicium.' We read of it, this hair-cloth, in mediæval works on penitential discipline. The word Cilicium is still retained in French, Spanish and Italian." (*Popular Commentary*).—Ver. 4. **Reasoned.** Conversed, discoursed, argued. (Comp. xvii. 2.) **Persuaded.** The result of the reasoning. **Greeks.** Proselytes of the gate, since they are to be supposed having been present in the synagogue. (Comp. viii. 27).—Ver. 5. **Silas and Timothy.** Comp. xvii. 14 sq. **Constrained.** Held, closely occupied with.—Ver. 6. **Opposed themselves.** Resisted. **Blasphemed.** Spoke reproachfully, reviled, viz. with reference to the apostles and their preaching. **Shook out his raiment.** Comp. xiii. 51. **Raiment.** Garments. **Blood.** The responsibility and punishment for bloodshed or destruction. (Comp. Matt. xxiii. 35; xxvii. 24.) **Heads.** Persons; the punishment will come from above. (Comp. Rom. i. 18.) **I am clean.** Not defiled by this blood, not responsible for it. (Comp. xx. 26;—Matt. vii. 6).—Ver. 7. **Titus.** The genuine reading seems to be *Titius*. **One that worshipped God.** Comp. xiii. 50. Nothing else is known of this proselyte, though some suppose that Titus, the disciple and assistant of Paul (Gal. ii. 1; Tit. i. 4), of whom nothing is recorded in the Acts, is meant here. **Whose house joined hard to the synagogue.** This shows the courage and determination of Paul in carrying out his office.—Ver. 8. **Crispus.** One of the few whom Paul himself baptized (1 Cor. i. 14; comp. Acts x. 48). **With all his house.** Comp. xvi. 15, 32-34. **Many of the Corinthians.** No doubt both Jews and Gentiles, the house of the proselyte being open to both. **Hearing believed.** The only



way to faith for an adult is hearing the Gospel; that is a condition that every one must, and can, comply with. (Comp. Rom. x. 17.)—Ver. 9. **By a vision.** Comp. xvi. 9; ix. 10. **Speak, and hold not thy peace.** Solemn and emphatic. **Hold not thy peace.** Be not silent, viz. in any special case where there might be a temptation to do so (Aorist); whilst **speak** (Present) denotes the continuity of the teaching and preaching.—Ver. 10. **I.** Emphatic. (Comp. Matt. xxviii. 18 sqq.) **Set on thee.** Attack thee, make an assault upon thee. **For I have,** etc. Therefore will I protect thee. **Much people.** Comp. John x. 16; xi. 52; Acts xiii. 48.—Ver. 11. **He dwelt.** Lit. *he sat*, denoting perhaps undisturbed activity. **A year and six months.** The question is, whether this includes the time of the events mentioned in vers. 1-6 and vers. 12-18, or only vers. 7-11. Some refer this statement to the whole time (1-18); others, to the time of vers. 1-11; others, to that of vers. 7-18. If the expression, *He dwelt*, has the meaning stated, only vers. 7-11 would seem to be included, since before and after Paul could not quietly do his work; and we are inclined to accept this interpretation, as the connection and wording of ver. 11, and also ver. 18, evidently favor it. During this time Paul wrote his first Epistles, viz. those to the Thessalonians, the second not long after the first, A. D. 52-54. (Comp. Acts xviii. 5 and 1 Thess. i. 1; iii. 6; ii. 17; 2 Thess. i. 1; ii. 15.)—Ver. 12. **Achaia.** The name of the Roman province embracing Greece proper, the Peloponnesus included. **Gallio** was proconsul A. D. 53 and 54. His being the brother of Seneca no doubt gave rise to the legend that the latter had corresponded with Paul and become a Christian.—Ver. 13. **The law.** Namely, that of the Jews (comp. 15) to whom the Roman government had accorded the free exercise of their religion, which they now wanted to have pro-

tected against what they claimed to be errors and heresies.—Ver. 14. **Reason would that**, etc. Lit. *according to reason I would*, or *should*, etc. i. e. it would simply be right and just that I, etc. **Bear with you**. Gallio was no friend of the Jews and their ways, and consequently had to exercise self-restraint and patience to hear their complaints.—Ver. 15. **But if they are**. As your charges show them to be. **Words**. Doctrine. **Names**. Comp. 5. **Judge**. Emphatic; these questions it was not his office to decide. Though Gallio's motive was mainly religious indifference, his action was right and a model that should be imitated by every secular government: matters that merely pertain to man's relation to God and religion the state ought not to meddle with. (Comp. Matt. xxii. 21.) **I am not minded**. Do not want or wish.—Ver. 16. **Drave**. An archaic form for *drove*.—Ver. 17. **Sosthenes**. Some suppose that he afterwards became a Christian and assistant of Paul, and is identical with the person of that name mentioned 1 Cor. i. 1, though that name was of frequent occurrence. **None of these things**. Nothing that occurred there, the noise, the beating, etc.

(B.) THE CONCLUSION OF PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY TOUR AND THE BEGINNING OF THE THIRD.

18-23. And Paul, having tarried after this yet many days, took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchreæ: for he had a vow. And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. And when they asked him to abide a longer time, he consented not; but taking his leave of them, and saying, I will return again unto you, if God will, he set sail from Ephesus. And when he had landed at Cæsarea, he went up and saluted the church, and went down to Antioch. And having spent some time *there*, he departed, and went through the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, establishing all the disciples.

In consequence of the governor's indirect protection Paul for a good many days continued his work at Corinth, and then, having laid the foundation of one of the most prosperous churches, went back to Syria, the province to which Palestine formed a sort of an appendage, accompanied by his friends and co-workers Priscilla and Aquila. But before he left the scene of his last activity, he concluded a private vow by having his head shorn at Cenchreæ, the eastern harbor of Corinth, where a Christian church existed at an early date (18; comp. Rom. xvi. 1). He stopped for some time at Ephesus in Asia Minor, where he left his friends, no doubt to do pioneer work in the cause of Christianity, he himself setting them an example by immediately preaching the Gospel to the members of his own people at their sabbatical meetings (19). But when these asked him to stay longer, he, gladdened as his heart must have been at this favorable reception of the Gospel, could not consent, feeling it his duty to return as soon as possible to Jerusalem; but he promised them, God willing, to see them again on his return (20 sq.). From Ephesus he went to Cæsarea, the most convenient harbor for those that wanted to go to Jerusalem, and then up to this city, the seat of the mother congregation of Christianity. He greeted the brethren, especially the apostles living there, but stayed only a short time, going from there to Antioch, the starting-point of his journeys (22). Remaining here for some time, he went out upon his **third missionary tour** (A. D. 56-59), passing, as was natural, first through the churches, one after the other, situated in the eastern part of Asia Minor, and strengthening them in their most holy faith by relating his encouraging experiences as well as by further instruction, admonition, and consolation (23).

**Ver. 18. Priscilla and Aquila.** The former seems to have been the most zealous and energetic, and perhaps also the most gifted and learned, as in most passages she is mentioned first. (Comp. 26; Rom. xvi. 3; 2. Tim. iv. 19;—xviii. 2; 1. Cor. xvi. 19.) **Having shorn his head.** In accordance with the customs of the Jews (Num. vi. 1 sqq.) Paul had taken upon himself a vow, perhaps as an expression of his gratitude for the protection and blessing God had vouchsafed unto him during his stay at Corinth. It was only natural for the Jewish Christians to live in accordance with the customs of their people as far as they were not in conflict with the Gospel, at least as long as the temple and the Jewish polity existed; and this even aside from peculiar circumstances that may have moved Paul to act as he did. (Comp. xvi. 3; xxi. 20 sqq.) Some commentators, however, construe this clause, *having shorn*, etc., with *Aquila*, and regard that as the reason why Aquila here is mentioned after Priscilla, but cannot give a satisfactory reason for the same order in ver. 26. Grammatically, doubtless, *Aquila having shorn*, etc., can belong together; yea, it is even the most natural and obvious construction. Yet we fail to see any reason for making such a statement concerning an entirely secondary personage, whilst, if referring to Paul, the subject of the whole verse, it adds something to the picture of him who, though the apostle of the Gentiles, was as loyal to his own people and their customs as loyalty to Christ and His Gospel would permit.—**Ver. 19. Ephesus.** “The most important commercial city of Asia Minor. It was situated on a fertile plain, through which ran the river Cayster, just before it empties into the sea, with mountains on three sides, and the Icarian Sea on the west. . . . Ephesus was visited by Paul on his second missionary tour (Acts xviii. 19–21), and the Church here

was distinguished by having the great apostle 'for its founder, St. John for its counselor, and Timothy for its bishop.' It was here that Apollo was instructed by Aquila and Priscilla, and St. John spent his last years, and probably wrote his Gospel and Epistles. On his second visit Paul dwelt in Ephesus from two to three years (Acts xix.), and preached with great success. The third œcumenical council, which defined the doctrines of the Church against Nestorius, met at Ephesus (A. D. 431). The site of the once populous and magnificent city is now occupied by a squalid Turkish village. In apostolic times the most remarkable building in Ephesus was the temple of Diana, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. It was built of the purest marble, and was 425 feet in length and 220 feet in breadth. The roof was supported by 127 marble columns 60 feet high. This magnificent structure was destroyed by the Goths when they ravaged the city, 262 A. D., and it was not until 1869 that its remains were brought to light by Mr. J. T. Wood, who spent eleven years, from 1862 to 1874, in exploring the site of the ancient city." (*Concise Cyclopædia*.) **He left them there.** They seem to have made their home here for some time (comp. 1 Cor. xvi. 19); afterwards, however, we find them at Rome (comp. Rom. xvi. 3); then again near Timothy, in or about Ephesus (2 Tim. vi. 19). "The use of opportunities is one great lesson from their history. Paul probably availed himself of his intercourse in their common trade to bring the Gospel home to the Jew Aquila, he to his wife; she and he together, as true yoke-fellows in the Lord, to all within their reach: to Apollos, who became the mighty champion of Christianity, convincing the Jews from the Scriptures at Corinth (Acts xviii. 24 sqq.); setting up 'a church in their house' wherever they were: in Ephesus; then at Rome, risking

their lives for Paul, and earning the thanks of 'all the churches of the Gentiles.' " (FAUSSET, *Bible Cyclopaedia*.)

**Reasoned.** Comp. xvii. 2.—Ver. 21. **Saying.** Some manuscripts add here what is also found in the Authorized Version, *I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem.* *The feast that cometh* may mean the Passover, the main festival of the Jews; some, however, think of Pentecost (A. D. 55). These words may have been first written in the margin as a probable guess at the cause of Paul's hurry, and then by the mistake of a copyist incorporated in the text itself. **I will return,** etc. Comp. xix. 1.—Ver. 22. **Cæsarea.** Comp. viii. 40. **He went up.** Some understand this as meaning Cæsarea, this city itself, or the meeting-place of the congregation, having occupied a higher situation than the coast where Paul had landed; and it cannot be denied that grammatically this is the obvious interpretation, especially if the words mentioned in the note to the preceding verse are not genuine, but only a gloss that by mistake has crept into the text. But the words, *he went up*, seem to be entirely superfluous if they refer to Cæsarea, especially in such a succinct narrative as we have here, and the following words, *and went down to Antioch*, are more suitable when Jerusalem is the place from which he *went down*, its location being much higher than that of Antioch, whilst this is not the case with Cæsarea. (Comp. John ii. 13; vii. 8.) This journey to Jerusalem, Paul's fourth after his conversion, if it really took place, is not mentioned Gal. ii.; but this can be explained by the brevity of this visit, which in itself would have prevented Paul's receiving instruction from the other apostles as to the Gospel that he was to preach (comp. Gal. i. 11 sqq.), and hence needed no mention there. **Antioch.** Comp. xi. 20.—Ver. 23. **Galatia and Phrygia.** Comp. xvi. 6.

Paul appears to have taken the opposite course from the one taken in his second missionary tour, first going northwest to the congregations in Galatia and from there southwest to Phrygia and Ephesus; and this would seem entirely natural, if he intended to go to Ephesus after visiting the congregations founded by him before. Some, however, regard *Galatia* as taken in the wider sense, as the name of the Roman province that included also Pisidia, Isauria, Lycaonia, and some districts of Phrygia, so that the cities of Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe (comp. xiv. 1 sqq.) would be included. But we see from xiv. 11 that Luke looks upon these cities as belonging to Lycaonia; and he mentions Galatia only after Paul has gone from those cities through Phrygia, hence regards Galatia as a country separated from those cities by Phrygia (xvi. 1-6). Consequently the Acts use *Galatia* in the stricter, customary, not in the political sense recently introduced by the Romans, and this is also the rule with the profane writers of that time.

#### (C.) APOLLOS AT EPHEBUS AND CORINTH.

24-28. Now a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by race, a learned man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the scriptures. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught carefully the things concerning Jesus, knowing only the baptism of John: and he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more carefully. And when he was minded to pass over into Achaia, the brethren encouraged him, and wrote to the disciples to receive him: and when he was come, he helped them much which had believed through grace: for he powerfully confuted the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

During the stay of Priscilla and Aquila at Ephesus and before Paul's return to that place a certain Jew, Apollos, a native of Alexandria in Egypt, came there. He was a

man that in an unusual measure possessed the gift of eloquence and at the same time had a good and ready knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures (24). He had already been instructed in the Gospel revelation of the only true way to happiness and salvation, and having a burning zeal to spread the glad tidings, he, to the best of his ability, spoke privately and publicly of what he knew concerning Jesus of Nazareth, though at that time he was acquainted with the teaching and baptism of John only (25). When in his zeal he began to speak frankly of his faith to the members of his people, Priscilla and Aquila, perceiving immediately that he was still lacking in knowledge, entered upon a friendly intercourse with him and imparted to him a more accurate conception of saving truth (26). And when he expressed the desire to cross over to Greece, the brethren in the faith encouraged him in this, knowing that he would find a most promising field of labor there, and gave him a letter of recommendation. And Apollos soon showed himself worthy of this; for by the grace of God he became of great use to the Church at Corinth (27), in public debate powerfully confuting the Jewish objections to the Gospel, proving by means of the Old Testament Scriptures that in Jesus of Nazareth the promised Messiah had truly appeared (28).

Ver. 24. **Apollos.** Abbreviated form of Apollonios. (Comp. 1 Cor. i. 12; iii. 5 sq.; iv. 6.) **An Alexandrian.** "Alexandria was founded by Alexander the Great, 332 B. C. Next to Rome and Antioch, it was the most magnificent city of antiquity, as well as the chief seat of Grecian learning and literature. Large numbers of Jews made it their home. At the opening of the present century it had fallen into decay, and was but a small village; but it has regained its former prosperity and now



has a population of over 200,000. Alexandria was the seat of the famous catechetical school, which tradition says was established by St. Mark the Evangelist. Pantænus was the first teacher of the school of whom we know with certainty. He was succeeded by Clement, whose successor was Origen." (*Concise Cyclopaedia*.) **A learned man.** Better, *an eloquent man*. (Comp. 28.) His *learning* is expressed in the last clause of this verse, *mighty in the Scriptures*. Also passages in Corinthians that refer to him as by some opposed to Paul indicate that his special gift was eloquence. (Comp. 1 Cor. ii. 1-4; 2 Cor. x. 10.)—Ver. 25. **The way of the Lord.** The way of salvation as revealed and prepared by Christ. (Comp. ix. 2.) **Fervent in Spirit.** His heart was burning with zeal. (Comp. Rom. xii. 11.) **Knowing only the baptism of John.** (Comp. xix. 1 sq.) It would seem that Apollos had been taught and baptized by a disciple of John the Baptist who had not been in connection with the disciples of Christ, either not at all or at least not after Christ's resurrection and ascension. So he had no knowledge of the institution of baptism in the form and manner prescribed by Christ nor of the fuller revelation of Christ especially through His death, resurrection, ascension, and pouring out of the Holy Ghost. But what he knew of Jesus of Nazareth, as it had been taught by John to his disciples and by them again to others, this he fully and even enthusiastically believed and communicated to others. He does not seem to have been baptized again—also a proof that the baptism of John was essentially the same as the baptism instituted by Christ. (Comp. i. 5; xix. 4 sq.)—Ver. 26. **The way of God.** The same as the *way of the Lord* (25), viz. the way of salvation that the Triune God has prepared and revealed unto men.—Ver. 27. **Was minded.** Wished, desired. **Achaia.** Comp. 12. **Wrote**

**to the disciples.** The first instance of this afterwards so frequent means of ensuring and protecting Christian hospitality. (Comp. 2 Cor. iii. 1.) Some translate here as follows, *The brethren wrote encouragingly to the disciples*, viz. encouraging the latter to receive Apollos though as yet a perfect stranger to them. Both translations give a fitting sense; but the former, i. e. the one in the Revised Version, seems to us to be more in conformity with the order of words in the original and also the tense of the verb translated *encouraged*, the literal translation being, *having encouraged, the brethren wrote to the disciples to receive him*, and not, *the brethren wrote to the disciples, encouraging to receive him*. **Through grace.** Can be construed with either *helped*, or *believed*; the latter construction is favored by the position of the words, the former by the general sense and the context.—Ver. 28. **Publicly.** According to its position can be connected with *confuted* as well as with *shewing*; the former connection seems preferable.

## THE THIRD MISSIONARY TOUR OF PAUL—

A. D. 56–59 (Chs. XIX.—XXI. 16).

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### CHAPTER XIX.

#### PAUL AT EPHESUS.

##### *(A.) The Disciples of John at Ephesus.*

1–7. And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found certain disciples : and he said unto them, Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed? And they *said* unto him, Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Ghost was *given*. And he said, Into what then were ye baptized? And they said, Into John's baptism. And Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Jesus. And when they heard this they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And they were in all about twelve men.

Whilst Apollos was thus laboring at Corinth, Paul, having gone through the inland districts of Asia Minor, came to Ephesus and there met about a dozen men that passed by the name of Christians (1), but whom he soon found to be without the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Hence he put the question to them whether they had at all received such gifts when they had come to believe in Christ; and he received the answer that they had not even learned that these gifts, promised for the time when

the Messiah had appeared, were already to be had (2). And to the other question of Paul what, then, had been proposed to them as the object of faith and confession when they were baptized, they replied, that it was only what John proposed as such an object to those that were baptized by him, namely, the Messiah still to appear and therefore imperfectly revealed and understood (3). Paul then explained to them that John's baptism was intended to lead to repentance and, in connection with his preaching, to pave the way for faith in the Messiah that was already coming; and that now He had come and revealed Himself in the person of Jesus of Nazareth (4). Having learned this, those men immediately asked to be baptized as believers in Jesus as the promised Lord and Saviour of mankind (5). And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, they also received the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, speaking with tongues and prophesying (6).

**Ver. 1. The upper country.** The countries mentioned xviii. 23, called so in contradistinction to the western coast of Asia Minor where Ephesus was situated. The name *upper districts*, or *country*, was customary for the eastern parts of Asia Minor, the coast near Ephesus being lower. **Disciples.** Christians in a wider sense, regarding themselves as such and associating with the Christians.—**Ver. 2. Did ye receive**, etc. The form of the question in the original implies doubt and uncertainty. **We did not so much as hear**, etc. This can hardly be understood as meaning that they had not even heard of the existence of the Holy Ghost, seeing that John had so distinctly spoken about Him (e. g. Mark i. 8; John iii. 34); but it must be understood in the light of John vii. 39. Even those that simply knew the Old Testament Scriptures could not be in doubt about the existence of the Holy Spirit. (Comp. 2 Sam.

xxiii. 2, 3; Isa. lxi. 1; lxiii. 10, 11, 14.) "They were ignorant of the first Christian Pentecost and its marvels. They knew nothing of His miraculous influences. . . . There were, we may well conceive, followers of the Baptist in many foreign lands. His stirring call to repentance, his burning summons to Israel with the old prophetic fervor to turn again to their Lord, found a response in many a world-weary heart far beyond the desert where he preached; and as we have stated above, this whole narrative, first concerning Apollos, and now of these unknown ones, is introduced to tell us that in ways similar to the one here narrated, through the instrumentality of believers like Priscilla and Aquila and Paul, the great majority of the hearers of the Baptist were brought to the full knowledge of the faith of Christ." (*Pop. Comm.*)

—Ver. 3. **Into John's baptism.** With regard to their faith and confession when they were baptized their attention was directed to the baptism of John; their baptism was to be, in essence and efficacy, like unto that administered by John. From this it would seem that they had not been baptized by John himself, but rather by some one of his disciples (comp. xviii. 25); and how well these disciples had understood or remembered the teachings of John we have no means of knowing, there being doubtless a great difference between different ones: the one that instructed and baptized Apollos might know more than the one that baptized these twelve, and hence there could be, and probably was, a great difference between the religious knowledge of Apollos and that of these men.—Ver. 4. **Baptism of repentance.** Comp. i. 5. If John's baptism was intended to bring about *repentance unto remission of sins* (Mark i. 4), it must have been *essentially* the same as Christian baptism; for repentance unto remission of sins cannot be without faith

and the Holy Ghost, and such a repentance is exactly what Christian baptism is intended to effect and seal (Tit. iii. 5, 6). **They should believe on him which should come after him.** That being the difference between John's baptism and Christ's, the latter directing and requiring men to believe in the One that *had already come* and finished His work. The baptism of John and that of Christ's disciples before His death, resurrection, and ascension (John iv. 1, 2) were without any doubt identical, and of no other baptism could Nicodemus understand Jesus to be speaking (John iii. 5); and yet Jesus says of it, "*Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;*" in other words, He identifies it with the baptism instituted by Himself. (Comp. Tit. iii. 5 sq.)—Ver. 5. **They were baptized.** Of course, by Paul or his assistants. (Comp. 1 Cor. i. 14 sqq.; Acts x. 48.) An accurate and unbiased examination and interpretation of the holy record cannot but lead to this understanding. The baptism of John was a baptism founded upon, and pointing to, the Messiah that *was already coming*, and hence, as a rule, was regarded as a sufficient initiation into the New Testament kingdom of God, as in the case of the apostles and of Apollos (comp. xviii. 25); but, being what it was, it could not preclude, under certain exceptional circumstances, e. g. when the teaching accompanying it had been very imperfect, the baptism founded upon, and pointing to, the Messiah that *already has come* and performed His redemptive work. **Into the name of the Lord Jesus.** Comp. ii. 38.—Ver. 6. **The Holy Ghost came on them.** Comp. viii. 14 sqq. **And.** The usual consequence in those times. **Spake with tongues.** In an ecstatic condition uttered sounds of rapturous devotion and joy that could not be understood without special interpretation.

(Comp. I Cor. xii. 10; xiv. 1 sqq.) This *speaking with tongues* cannot be essentially different from the *speaking with other tongues* (ii. 4, 6; comp. x. 46). **Prophesied.** Gave utterance to divine truth by divine inspiration (comp. xi. 27). And this they did for some time, as the tense of the verbs (Imperfect) implies.

(B.) *Paul at Ephesus.*

8-41. And he entered into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading *as to* the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when some were hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. And this continued for the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: insomuch that unto the sick were carried away from his body handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out. But certain also of the strolling Jews, exorcists, took upon them to name over them which had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, a chief priest, which did this. And the evil spirit answered and said unto them, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and mastered both of them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. And this became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, that dwelt at Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. Many also of them that had believed came, confessing, and declaring their deeds. And not a few of them that practised curious arts brought their books together, and burned them in the sight of all: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed.

Now after these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome. And having sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.

And about that time there arose no small stir concerning the Way. For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines of Diana, brought no little business unto the craftsmen; whom he gathered

together, with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this business we have our wealth. And ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: and not only is there danger that this our trade come into disrepute; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana be made of no account, and that she should even be deposed from her magnificence, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. And when they heard this, they were filled with wrath, and cried out, saying, Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians. And the city was filled with the confusion: and they rushed with one accord into the theatre, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel. And when Paul was minded to enter in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. And certain also of the chief officers of Asia, being his friends, sent unto him, and besought him not to adventure himself into the theatre. Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was in confusion; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. And they brought Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made a defence unto the people. But when they perceived that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians. And when the townclerk had quieted the multitude, he saith, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there who knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is temple-keeper of the great Diana, and of the *image* which fell down from Jupiter? Seeing then that these things cannot be gainsaid, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rash. For ye have brought *hither* these men, which are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess. If therefore Demetrius, and the craftsmen that are with him, have a matter against any man, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls: let them accuse one another. But if ye seek anything about other matters, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. For indeed we are in danger to be accused concerning this day's riot, there being no cause *for it*: and as touching it we shall not be able to give account of this concourse. And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

In accordance with his custom Paul also here at Ephesus first preached the Gospel to his own people, frankly conversing with them for a quarter of a year and convincing them that what he taught concerning the kingdom of heaven was nothing but divine truth (8). But when some of them hardened their hearts to the divine call extended to them through his preaching, yea, spoke



evil of the way to heaven as revealed in the Gospel, and this publicly, he withdrew from their assemblies, taking his faithful hearers with him, and henceforth preached daily in the private school of a certain Tyrannus (9). Thus Paul labored for two years, so that every inhabitant of western Asia Minor, whether Jew or Gentile, could hear the word of saving truth (10). And this preaching of Paul was confirmed by extraordinary wonders performed through him (11), even pieces of his clothing transmitting the healing power given him by God and called forth by the incipient faith of the people (12). Perceiving this, some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists, men claiming to be in possession of magical arts derived from wise Solomon, undertook to cast out demons by commanding them to depart in obedience to that Jesus whom Paul preached (13). Thus seven sons of a high priest tried this (14). But when in one case two of them did so, the demon possessing the person concerned declared that he fully recognized the authority both of Jesus and Paul, but in no wise their own (15), and overpowering and maltreating them he forced them to flee out of the house (16). This occurrence, of course, became known everywhere in the city and caused the name of Jesus to be both feared and praised (17). And many of those that now had become believers in Christ openly confessed their former evil practices (18), and especially a number of those that had practised sorcery and other superstitious arts brought the books that taught those abominations and publicly burned them, though their price was very high, namely, about \$9,000, or, as some think, even \$30,000 (19). Thus, then, the Gospel spread externally and manifested also its heart-changing power (20). Now Paul resolved to make a journey to Jerusalem, taking his way through Macedonia

and Achaia, and then to carry out his long-cherished desire of visiting the church at Rome (21). So he sent before him two of his assistants, Timothy and Erastus, whilst he himself remained yet for some time in Asia Minor (22). But his activity at Ephesus was not to come to a close before a tumult had been raised by the opponents of the Gospel truth (23). Ephesus boasted of possessing one of the seven wonders of the world, namely, the celebrated temple of Diana, a goddess worshipped by many nations of Asia. The pilgrims visiting this temple were wont to take with them as memorials and amulets small models of the building which were made of wood, silver, or gold. There lived at that time at Ephesus a silversmith by the name of Demetrius who gave employment to many by having such silver models made (24). When he saw that the preaching of Paul was listened to and accepted by many, he became afraid of losing a considerable part of his trade, and, using religious fanaticism as a convenient and helpful cloak, he called together the artisans employed by him, as also their workmen, and apprised them of the great danger threatening, in the first place, themselves in consequence of the success hitherto attending the endeavor of Paul to prove to his hearers coming from all parts of Asia Minor that there is but one true God and that the supposed gods of the heathen are simply idols created by the depraved fancy of man, and that hence no divine power attached to their images (25 sq.); and then threatening also the goddess, namely, that her temple may become disregarded and that something may be lost of her majesty so far venerated by the inhabitants not only of Asia Minor but of the whole world (27). These men, of course, were filled with anger and then gave vent to their feelings by shouting the praises of their goddess (28). And this com-

motion spread throughout the city, and everybody ran to the theatre, the usual place for public meetings. Two travelling companions of Paul, the Macedonians Gaius and Aristarchus, were compelled to go with them (29). Paul himself wanted to go among the crowd to defend his faith and activity; but his brethren in the faith did not permit him to do so, fearing, no doubt, that the fanaticism of the populace would merely be increased thereby (30). Some also of the principal religious officers of the province, who had learned to esteem him, sent messengers entreating him not to take such a risk (31). Meanwhile the excited populace had come together for an irregular, unlawful meeting, the majority not knowing at all why they had assembled (32). At last a Jew by the name of Alexander was thrust forward by his coreligionists to defend them against the possible assumption of siding with their countryman Paul, and at the same time he was instructed by the authors of the tumult to defend them and their cause before the people (33). But when he was recognized as a Jew, heathen fanaticism prevailed, and nothing was listened to but universal and continuous wild shouts in praise of Diana (34). Then the town-clerk intervened and quieted the noisy crowd, stating that their most humble devotion to the goddess and her heaven-given image could and would not be questioned by any one (35); hence there was not the least necessity or excuse for such an excitement or uproar (36). To do anything to those companions of Paul that had been dragged to the meeting would be rash and unjustifiable, since they had neither committed a crime against the temple nor against the goddess herself (37). If Demetrius and his associates had any personal charges to make, they could and should take the proper course, bringing a suit before the proconsul, or

governor, when he held court (38). All other matters could be adjusted in the regular, legal assembly of the people (39). To proceed in such an unjustifiable way might even subject the city to a charge of riot, a crime that the Roman government was sure to punish severely (40).

Ver. 8. **Reasoning.** Comp. xvii. 2. **Persuading.** The result of the reasoning. **The things concerning the kingdom of God**; e. g. that Christ had founded it by His vicarious life, sufferings, and death; that every one who by faith accepted Him as his Lord and Saviour was a member, etc.—Ver. 9. **Were hardened.** Lit. *became hard*, obstinate, stubborn. When a man hardens himself by wilfully and persistently withstanding the divine grace and will, God at last withdraws His grace from him and delivers him over to the power of sin and Satan, so that his conversion and salvation become more and more difficult and finally impossible. (Comp. Rom. i. 21-26; Ex. xiii. 15; vii. 3, 22; Heb. iii. 13; Rom. ix. 18.) It is not necessary to assume here more than a self-hardening, which, if persisted in, would, of course, lead to divine hardening. **Disobedient.** Towards the Gospel call, remaining in their unbelief. **Way.** Comp. xviii. 25. **Reasoning.** Comp. xvii. 2. **Tyrannus.** Probably a Greek teacher of rhetoric or philosophy, though some suppose him to have been a Jew teaching rabbinical traditions. It may also be that *the school of Tyrannus* was the name of a locality, Tyrannus himself being no more the teacher.—Ver. 10. **Two years.** No doubt the three months mentioned ver. 8 are to be added to these two years in stating the whole time of Paul's stay at Ephesus; but the question is whether the same is to be done with regard to the "*while*" spoken of ver. 22. We think so, because of what is stated in vers. 21, 22 and xx. 1, 31. See the explanation given there. **So**

**that all . . . heard.** Lit. *so that all could hear* (Infinitive). **Asia.** Comp. ii. 9. **Both Jews and Greeks.** Lit. *not only Jews but also Greeks.* (Comp. Rom. i. 16.) **Greeks.** Including proselytes of the gate (comp. viii. 27). About this time, close of A. D. 55 or beginning of 56, Paul most probably wrote the Epistle to the Galatians (Gal. i. 6).—Ver. 11. **Special.** Lit. *not the common.* **Miracles.** Lit. *powers.* (Comp. ii. 22.)—Ver. 12. Comp. v. 15 ; Matt. ix. 20 sqq. **Body.** Lit. *surface of the body, skin.* Whatever was used as a vehicle conveying the miraculous power of healing had been in immediate contact with Paul's person, showing that the power was inherent in him, not in anything belonging to him. **Aprons.** Linen coverings that workmen and servants used to wear. **And the evil spirits went out.** Something that could be expected as being connected with the healing of diseases, and still not simply a special kind of this. (Comp. Luke iv. 40 sq.) *Being possessed with a devil* was not merely an especially grievous natural disease. (Comp. Matt. iv. 24.)—Ver. 13. Comp. Matt. xii. 27. Ephesus was from olden times considered a seat of heathen magic ; hence, it is not to be wondered at that Jewish magicians were also to be found there. "There were, as heathen writers tell us, numbers of these Jews in various parts of the world, who wandered about trading on the credulity of men and women, professing to be magicians, fortune-tellers, practising the exorcism of evil spirits. Among the Hebrew race there seems always to have existed a strange hankering after these dealings with unlawful arts, and we find in the Pentateuch repeated laws and enactments against these sorcerers, witches, dealers in enchantments, and the like. At the time of our Lord many of the Jewish exorcists pretended to possess a power of casting out evil spirits by some occult art, which they professed was de-

rived from king Solomon. This legend Josephus relates in the following terms: 'God enabled Solomon to learn the art of expelling demons; he left behind him the method of using exorcism by which demons are driven away so that they never return, and this manner of cure is of great power unto this day.' These impostors, seeing with their own eyes that Paul could really do what they only pretended to do, attempted to use what they fancied was his powerful incantation; powerful it was indeed, only they were ignorant *how* that glorious name alone could be used." (*Popular Commentary*.) **By Jesus.** Who will punish you if you do not obey. **Whom Paul preacheth.** This they added, perhaps, in order to shield themselves against the charge that they were believers in this Jesus who had been, and still was, rejected by their people. These persons are called *exorcists*, from a Greek word that means, *to exact an oath*, and then also, *to adjure*, that is, to charge solemnly, as if under oath or penalty. Hence, an exorcist is a person that, really or pretendedly, casts or drives out an evil spirit by religious or magical formulas or ceremonies, expels them by means of adjuration, incantation, and the like.—Ver. 14. **Chief priest.** Whether a former ruling high priest, or only a member of an old high-priestly family, is not known. (Comp. iv. 6.) The name does not occur anywhere else as that of a Jew. **Which did this.** Lit. *doing this*, i. e. continually, as their occupation.—Ver. 15. **Jesus I know.** Recognize Him as my superior and master. **Paul I know.** As the servant of Jesus. (Comp. xvi. 17; Matt. viii. 29.) *Jesus* and *Paul* are emphatic by position and the definite article which points to the fact that they are well known. **Ye.** Also emphatic, in contempt.—Ver 16. **Prevailed against them.** Lit. and better, to distinguish this expression from the preceding one, *used his strength*

against them, treated them with violence. If all the seven brothers were present, as would seem to have been the case, we must assume that two were alone, or more, active. **Naked.** Either in our modern sense, i. e. without any clothing; or in the biblical sense, without the upper garments. (Comp. Mark xiv. 51; John xxi. 7.) **So that they fled.** Lit. *so that they had to flee*.—Ver. 17. **Both Jews and Greeks.** Lit. *not only Jews but also Greeks*. (Comp. 10.) **Fear fell upon.** Comp. Luke i. 12; Acts ii. 43. The first impression of something extraordinary, especially supernatural, whether emanating from God or Satan, is fear. **The name . . . was magnified.** Comp. Luke vii. 16. That was the final result after the occurrence had been properly considered in its bearings: the name of Jesus had to be recognized as above every other name since He had revealed Himself also here as superior to Satan and all his instruments whether demons or men. (Comp. Phil. ii. 9 sqq.)—Ver. 18. **Had believed.** Had come to believe and now were believers. **Came,** etc. That they did this is looked upon as a natural consequence of what had occurred. **Deeds.** In a bad sense (comp. Rom. viii. 13), and in a general sense. Whatever evil deeds they had committed, they *confessed and declared*, made known, disclosed, reported openly and frankly, without keeping anything back. This was the first fruit of their true repentance. (Comp. Matt. iii. 6.)—Ver. 19. **Curious arts.** Lit. *the (well-known) impertinent and superfluous things*, especially magic. **Their books.** "These books were, no doubt, parchment or papyrus, filled with these partly Jewish, partly heathenish incantations, recipes for love philters, formulas more or less ancient to be used in casting out evil spirits, and the like. Ephesus, we know, swarmed with magicians and astrologers; and a portion of the trade of the city, whither resorted so many pil-

grims to the shrine of Diana, consisted in these works and formularies of incantation. The famous 'Ephesian letters' or spells, to which an allusion is frequently made by heathen writers, no doubt formed part of this unholy property which these Christians . . . burned in this public fashion 'before all men.' These 'Ephesian letters' were small slips of parchment in silk bags, on which were written strange cabalistic words and sentences, mysterious and often apparently meaningless. These, men and women were in the habit of carrying about on their persons as charms or amulets to shield them from danger and from harm, or to procure them good fortune in their undertakings. We read how Cræsus, when on his funeral pile, repeated these 'Ephesian spells.' Again we are told, how once in the Olympian games an Ephesian wrestler struggled successfully with his opponents from Miletus, because he had wound round his ankles some of these 'Ephesian charms,' but that being deprived of them he was twice overthrown." (*Popular Commentary*.) **They counted.** Most probably the former magicians themselves. **Fifty thousand pieces of silver.** Lit. *of silver*, or money, *fifty thousand*; and the question is, what is to be supplied, *shekels*, or *drachmas*? As Luke wrote, not for Hebrew, but for Greek readers, there is scarcely a doubt that the latter, not the former, is to be supplied. A *drachma* was equivalent to about 17 cents in our American money, a *shekel* to about 60. The price mentioned here is of course that of books of such highly-prized contents, not of books merely of the same size and number.—Ver. 20. **So.** Thus, in such a manner and degree, in the way described; it need not be construed with *mightily*, though it can be, but may be connected with *grew*, or belong to the whole sentence. Some even translate, "*Thus the word grew and prevailed*



*according to the power of the Lord,"* which also is in accordance with grammar, but not with the usage of Acts where *the word of the Lord*, or *of God*, is a constantly occurring expression, e. g. viii. 25; xiii. 48 sq.; xv. 35 sq.; xix. 10 (comp. 1 Thess. i. 8; 2 Thess. iii. 1);—iv. 29, 31; vi. 2, 7; viii. 14; xi. 1; xii. 24; xiii. 5, 7, 44, 46, etc. In our present passage, indeed, the usual order, *the word of the Lord*, is reversed to, *the Lord's word*; but that simply emphasizes that it is *the Lord's word*, and explains why it grew mightily. **Grew**, locally or externally; **prevailed**, internally, in the hearts of men, exerting and manifesting its regenerating and sanctifying power there.—Ver. 21. **Now after these things were ended.** Viz. the teaching in the school of Tyrannus and what was connected with it, as described vers. 10-20. Hence, we think that the time spoken of in the next verse as *a while* is to be added to the three months mentioned in verse 8 and the two years of verse 10. **Purposed in the spirit.** Resolved. (Comp. v. 4.) **When he had passed**, etc. So he wanted first to visit again the congregations founded on the preceding tour in Europe (comp. xvi. 11 sqq.), strengthening the brethren there and finishing a collection for the support of the poor Christians in Palestine (1 Cor. xvi. 1 sqq.; 2 Cor. viii.; Rom. xv. 25 sqq.). **Achaia.** Comp. xviii. 12. **I must also see Rome.** He knew that this was according to God's will. (Comp. xxiii. 11; Rom. xv. 22 sqq.; i. 10 sqq.)—Ver. 22. **Erastus.** Certainly the same as the one mentioned 2 Tim. iv. 20; perhaps also identical with the treasurer of Corinth spoken of Rom. xvi. 23. Nothing else is known concerning him. **For a while.** Perhaps some months. (Comp. 1 Cor. v. 8 with xvi. 8.) Comp. also the preceding verse. About this time Paul wrote his first Epistle to the Corinthians (about Easter 58;

comp. 1 Cor. xvi. 5 sqq.).—Ver. 23. **Way.** Comp. xviii. 25.—Ver. 24. **Shrines.** Lit. temples, sanctuaries, viz. miniature temples modelled after the actual building. **Craftsmen.** Or, artificers. The temple of Diana at Ephesus had been burnt B. C. 356 by the noted fanatic Herostratus, but rebuilt in a still more magnificent style, being about the size of the renowned cathedral at Cologne; later, A. D. 262, it was again burnt by the Goths. (Comp. xviii. 19.)—Ver. 25. **Sirs.** Lit. *men.* (Comp. ii. 22.) **By.** Lit. *out of*, from, denoting the *source*.—Ver. 26. **See.** Here at Ephesus. **Hear.** Concerning other places. **See.** With astonishment and indignation. The seeing and hearing is still going on, evidences and reports presenting themselves daily. **At Ephesus . . . throughout all Asia.** These words really belong to **much people**, the literal translation being, *Much people not only of Ephesus, but also of nearly all Asia.* By being separated from each other the two expressions, *much people*, and, *not only of Ephesus*, etc., are made more emphatic, the latter getting the greater emphasis by being put first, which emphasis the English translation tries to retain by its free rendering. **Asia.** Comp. ii. 9. **Persuaded and turned away.** Lit. *by persuading turned away*, viz. from worshipping the old heathen idols. **They be no gods.** Comp. Psalm cxv. 3 sqq.—Ver. 27. **This our trade.** Lit. *this part*, or thing, *for us*: that this thing, our trade, come into disrepute for us, or to our harm. **And even.** A climax that can be expected from what precedes. **She should be deposed from her magnificence.** Lit. somewhat *of her magnificence be destroyed*.—Ver. 28. **When they heard this, they were,** etc. Lit. *and having heard this and having been filled with wrath, they cried.* **Cried out.** Continually (Imperfect).—Ver. 29. **Confusion.** Disturbance of riotous persons. **They.** Those that had

come together, including Demetrius and his workmen. **Theatre.** A place for public meeting especially at Ephesus where it is supposed to have accommodated at least 20,000 persons. **Gaius.** Not the same as the one mentioned xx. 4 or 1 Cor. i. 14; but possibly identical with the one spoken of Rom. xvi. 23. The name was frequent. **Aristarchus.** Comp. xx. 4; xxvii. 2; Col. iv. 10; Philem. 24. Though they were taken along forcibly, no harm was done them. How, and where, and when these two Macedonians became *Paul's companions in travel*, we do not know. Some suppose that the expression is used here anticipatively, of Paul's next journey through Macedonia to Achaia; others find in it an allusion to a shorter journey made by Paul during his stay at Ephesus.—Ver. 30. **Was minded.** Wished; if he had been determined to do so, he would not have suffered himself to be kept back. **People.** In the theatre.—Ver. 31. **Chief officers of Asia.** Ten men whose main duty it was to provide the costly games and festivities in honor of the gods and the emperor in the province of Asia (comp. ii. 9), hence called Asiarchs, i. e. rulers of Asia. Thus there were also Galatiarchs, Bithyniarchs, Syriarchs, etc., that is, men who had the same office in Galatia, Bithynia, Syria, etc. **Adventure himself.** Betake himself, go, to a dangerous place.—Ver. 32. **Therefore.** *Now*, continuing the narrative of ver. 29 which is interrupted by vers. 30 and 31. **The assembly.** That it was irregular and illegal is seen from ver. 39. **In confusion.** Without order, leader, clearly understood object, etc.—Ver. 33. **They brought out of the multitude.** Better, *of the crowd* some *instructed*, i. e. told him what to say, how to speak for Demetrius and his fellows. **The Jews putting him forward;** viz. to defend them. Hence, he seems to have been a Jew who belonged to the party

of Demetrius, perhaps even worked for him; and it is entirely probable that *Alexander the coppersmith*, mentioned 2 Tim. iv. 14, is the same person, having, perhaps, afterwards become a Christian, but only in name. This assumption becomes still more probable when we consider that his name is mentioned here without any explanation or introduction, as that of a man well known among those for whom Luke wrote. **Would have made.** Was determined, had the intention and purpose.—Ver. 34. **Perceived.** Alexander, perhaps, having mentioned his nationality at the beginning in order to let the people know that he did not side with Paul. The people, however, were not now in a mood to make a distinction between the different opponents of their goddess, i. e. between Jews and Christians.—Ver. 35. **Townclerk.** One of the most prominent officers of the city of Ephesus ("Secretary of State" of the city), often mentioned in lately-discovered inscriptions; he had, also in other cities, the office of superintending the archives, composing official documents, and reading them in the assembly of the people. **Men of Ephesus.** Comp. ii. 22, 29. **What man is there.** Lit. *who, then, is there of men.* **Temple-keeper.** Lit. *temple-sweeper*, an honorary title of certain cities, especially of Asia Minor, in which the special worship of some deity, or deified person, had been established; thus also, as an inscription proves, of Ephesus—an accidental, and so much the stronger, proof of the reliability of the Scriptures also in minor details. **The image which fell down,** etc. "Very different from the fair form of the huntress Diana with which we are so familiar in Grecian art—a rude, four-fold, many-breasted female figure ending below the breast in a square pillar curiously carved with ancient symbols of bees, and corn, and flowers.

Black with age, the venerated image was more like a Hindoo than a Greek idol. In common with other prized images, it was reputed to have fallen from heaven. The history of the idol is lost in remote antiquity. It evidently had survived the burning of the temple by Herostratus. Probably the early Greek colonists in Ionia found it, a relic of a bygone worship, and adopted by them as their national idol." (*Popular Commentary*.)

**Jupiter.** In Greek, Zeus, the supposed god and ruler, and also the symbol, of heaven.—Ver. 36. **Rash.** Reckless, inconsiderate.—Ver. 37. **For.** Explains the necessity

of the admonition given, since they had already done something rash and unjustifiable, and were in danger of doing more. **These men.** The companions of Paul (29).

**Nor blasphemers of our goddess.** It was not the custom of Paul and his assistants to hurt the feelings of Jews or Gentiles by rude invectives, but rather by acknowledging what was good, comparatively, and leniently correcting mistakes and errors to gain the ear and heart of their hearers (comp. xvii. 22 sqq.; Rom. ix. 1 sqq.; x. 1 sq.)—an example set by the model missionary that ought to be followed by his successors.—Ver. 38. **Therefore.** Since

these men are no criminals that ought to be attended to immediately even at the risk of doing something that formally would be illegal, the populace taking the law into their own hands. **Craftsmen.** Comp. 24. **Proconsuls.** The plural of category, not denoting that at Ephesus there was more than one proconsul.—Ver. 39.

**Other matters.** That the assembly of the people could and should attend to, not of a personal and private character. **Shall.** Will, may. **Regular assembly.** Hence this one was not such. (Comp. 32.)—Ver. 40. **Indeed.** Better, *even*.

**Concerning this day.** This marginal rendering of R. V. is preferable, the sense being, *on ac-*

*count of what has taken place here to-day*; hence, the preceding words should be translated, *accused of riot. There being no cause*, etc. The reading approved by the best manuscripts is very difficult to understand, the negation (*not*) in the next clause being seemingly entirely out of place there, as also it is not found in the manuscripts followed by the A. V. The rendering of the R. V. seems to be the only one that gives good sense, though it must be admitted that the construction underlying it is not the obvious one. The literal translation of that clause is, *concerning which* (occurrence, viz. the disturbance and uproar of to-day) *we shall not be able to give an account concerning*, or, *with respect to, this concourse* (of disorderly people). The English critic, Dr. Hort, thinks the text here is corrupted, and suggests as a probable reading a very slight change of the words translated, *there being no cause*, so that the sense would be, *Although we are guilty of nothing concerning which we could not give an account with respect to this concourse*. The troublesome negation might, however, be a careless repetition of the preceding word, being the same in form in the old manuscripts which had neither accents nor breathings; though it is hardly probable that, being the more difficult reading, it would have crept into so many, and these the best, copies.

## CHAPTER XX.

### PAUL'S JOURNEY FROM EPHESUS TO GREECE AND BACK TO MILETUS.

1-38. And after the uproar was ceased, Paul having sent for the disciples and exhorted them, took leave of them, and departed for to go into Macedonia. And when he had gone through those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece. And when he had spent three months *there*, and a plot was laid against him by the Jews, as he was about to set sail for Syria, he determined to return through Macedonia. And there accompanied him as far as Asia Sopater of Berea, *the son of Pyrrhus*; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. But these had gone before, and were waiting for us at Troas. And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we tarried seven days.

And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and prolonged his speech until midnight. And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where we were gathered together. And there sat in the window a certain young man named Eutychus, borne down with deep sleep; and as Paul discoursed yet longer, being borne down by his sleep he fell down from the third story, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Make ye no ado; for his life is in him. And when he was gone up, and had broken the bread, and eaten, and had talked with them a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. And they brought the lad alive, and were not a little comforted.

But we, going before to the ship, set sail for Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, intending himself to go by land. And when he met us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene. And sailing from thence, we came the following day over against Chios; and the next day we touched at Samos; and the day after we came to Miletus. For Paul had determined to sail past Ephesus, that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hastening, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them,

Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time, serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears, and with trials which befell me by the plots of the Jews: how that I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost testifieth unto me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But I hold not my life of any account, as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God. Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in the which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops, to feed the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood. I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Wherefore watch ye, remembering that by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears. And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build *you* up, and to give *you* the inheritance among all them that are sanctified. I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. In all things I gave you an example, how that so labouring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the word which he had spoken, that they should behold his face no more. And they brought him on his way unto the ship.

After the tumult at Ephesus had come to an end, Paul set out on his contemplated journey, travelling first through Macedonia (1), visiting the different places where on his second tour he had planted congregations,



and imparting to those young Christians a great deal of consolation, exhortation, and so forth. Then he went south to Greece (2). Here he stayed for three months, no doubt, mainly at Corinth. And when from here he was about to take a ship for Syria in order to get to Jerusalem, his unbelieving and desperately-fanatical countrymen laid a plot to kill him on his way; but this plot was detected, and Paul made up his mind to go back to Asia by land, the same way he had come (3). On this journey he had as companions seven of his assistants, three from Macedonia, two from the eastern and two from the western part of Asia Minor (4). These, however, went before him, awaiting him at Troas, whilst Luke, after a lapse of six or seven years, again joined him and travelled with him, having doubtless continued the work in this country during the interval (5). ~~He~~ and Paul did not leave Philippi till after the festival of unleavened bread, or Easter. After a voyage of five days they met their companions at Troas and stayed there a week (6). On the first day of the week, Sunday, the day of Christ's resurrection, the Christians at Troas assembled for the purpose of celebrating the Lord's Supper. In these early times every public service of Christians was concluded by such a celebration, and hence, in imitation of the first Supper (Matt. xxvi. 20), took place in the evening. Thus also here at Troas. The principal speaker, as a matter of course, was Paul; and as on the following day he intended to continue his journey, he extended his discourse till midnight (7). In accordance with the Jewish custom of lighting a great number of lamps on days of joyful festivity the upper room where the meeting took place was well lighted (8). On account of the uncommonly long discourse of Paul, the heat of the crowded room perhaps also being a cause, a youth named

Eutychus that was sitting in one of those oriental windows fell into a deep sleep and at last even fell down upon the pavement a distance of three stories, and when taken up was found to be dead (9). But this accident, sad in itself, was turned into an occasion for joyous thanksgiving to God who through Paul restored the life of the youth (10). Then the assembly, led by Paul, concluded the service by partaking of the Lord's Supper and the feast of love at that time connected with it. Paul, however, stayed with them in edifying discourse till the break of day and then left them, comforted also very much, as they were, by the experience of divine protection as manifested by the miracle wrought through Paul (11 sq.).

Then Paul and his companions separated for some time, the latter going by ship around Cape Lectum to Assos and there waiting for Paul, who took the route by land, which was only half as long, wishing, perhaps, to pass the last days and hours in this region, where he had labored so long, as much as possible in solitary prayer and meditation (13). From Assos they went together to Mitylene, the beautiful capital of the island of Lesbos (14); then they passed the island of Chios, stopped for a short time at the island of Samos, and the next day came to Miletus (15). Thus they passed by Ephesus, since Paul wanted to spend no more time than was necessary in Asia, in order to get, if at all possible, to Jerusalem for the impending festival of Pentecost, when he could expect to meet a great concourse of people, both Jews and Christians; and if he had gone to Ephesus he could not but have stayed with his many disciples and friends at least for some time (16). At Miletus, where the ship seems to have stopped some days, Paul had the elders, or ministers, of the church at Ephe-

sus, and perhaps also of the neighboring congregations, called to him, to take a final leave of them, and through them of the brethren in general (17). He reminded them, in the first place, of his life and conduct during his labor in their midst (18). Serving his Lord and Master with never-ceasing humility, with the greatest earnestness and most heartfelt concern for the salvation of every soul committed to his care, and surrounded by manifold temptations and trials in consequence of the persistent insidious hostility of his own people (19), he had never, neither in public nor in private, kept back, from fear or love of men, any part of the saving truth (20), but on the contrary had done all he could to impress upon his hearers, whosoever they might be, whether self-righteous Jews or superstitious Gentiles, that without penitently turning to the true God and putting all their trust in Jesus as their God-given Lord and Redeemer they could not be saved (21). Now he could not stay with them for any length of time, feeling constrained in his spirit to hasten to Jerusalem, although he did not know in detail what was awaiting him there (22), yet being assured by the Holy Ghost through prophets everywhere that captivity and affliction would be his lot (23). But he was not in the least concerned about his own comfort or even life, being solely intent upon fulfilling to the very last the sacred mission given him by his Lord, to spread the glad tidings of the grace of God wherever he could (24). In the second place, Paul told the elders of his own firm conviction that this would be the last time that he could be with them and their fellow-Christians in Asia (25). Hence he would now solemnly declare unto them that he was not at fault if any one of them should be lost in eternal death (26), since he had not, from any consideration, withheld from them any part of the divine plan of

salvation (27). Now, and this is the third point he would impress upon them, now it is for them to see to it that the work so well begun be carried out in the same way. To do this, they must, first of all, pay attention to themselves so as to perform conscientiously the various duties of their responsible office and in general set a good example to the people. Then they must also be careful that the members of their congregations receive all that is necessary for their spiritual welfare and growth; for their office of superintending the faith and life of the souls committed to their care is not a self-chosen or man-given one, but has been entrusted to them by God the Holy Ghost Himself, who has endowed them with the necessary gifts and directed their appointment; and those that are thus entrusted to them, Christ, the true God, has made His people by shedding His own blood for them (28). To exercise such care will be extremely important, since Paul at least knows from his own experience among them that when he, their faithful guardian, has left them, dangerous false teachers from without will no longer hesitate to come among them, not caring for the welfare of the Church but intent only upon the attainment of their selfish ends (29). And these will be joined by men of their own number who have left the only path of heavenly truth and teach their vain conceits and speculations, endeavoring to turn Christ's believers into blind and fanatical followers of themselves (30). Hence the elders are admonished to be on their guard and to follow Paul's example of ceaseless, earnest watching and admonition (31). But they cannot do this except by the grace of God which He bestows through His Word. Therefore Paul now commends them to this God who is able, notwithstanding all enmity and opposition on the part of Satan and the world, to

increase their faith and love and finally to give them what will be enjoyed eternally by all those who in true faith have obtained that righteousness and holiness which alone is acceptable to God (32). In conclusion he points them to his own example of disinterestedness and unselfishness shown by not accepting any salary or support from his hearers (33), but rather supporting even others with the work of his toil-worn hands (34). For that was necessary in those times, lest persons weak in understanding and faith might come to think that a minister of the Gospel was simply seeking an easy life. And to encourage them under those peculiar circumstances to follow his example, burdensome as it might be, he reminds them of a saying of Christ not contained in our Gospels, but known to him and them by oral tradition, which speaks of the exceeding blessedness of being able and willing to do something for our fellow-men (35). Then, having prayed with them, he took leave, their hearts almost breaking at the idea of not meeting him again here on earth (36 sqq.).

Ver. 1. **After the uproar was ceased.** Paul stayed with the congregation at Ephesus until the danger had passed by, so that they might not be without guidance and consolation when they needed it most. How long this stay lasted we are not told; may be several weeks. Nor did Paul depart before having taken a formal, solemn, and affectionate leave of his fellow-Christians, thus doing all that was in his power to strengthen them for the future when he would no more be with them. As to the journey now begun comp. xix. 21. Hence the uproar was in no way the cause of this journey, but rather delayed it for some time.—Ver. 2. **Them.** The congregations founded on his second tour, or his first visit to Macedonia. (Comp. xvi. 11 sqq.; comp. also xix. 29.)

On this journey Paul also wrote the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, after Pentecost of A. D. 58. (Comp. 1 Cor. xvi. 8.) **Greece.** In the original, *Hellas*; in the opinion of almost all commentators here the same as Achaia (xix. 21), though originally denoting only central Greece and found in the New Testament only here. If the assumption mentioned be not granted we would have no warrant in our chapter that Paul really came to Achaia, as he intended to do (xix. 21). The general assumption, furthermore, is that Paul during his stay at Corinth on this journey, in the winter of A. D. 58-59 (comp. 1 Cor. xvi. 6), wrote his Epistle to the Romans. (Comp. Rom. xvi. 1, 2, 23; 1 Cor. i. 14.) Some conclude from 2 Cor. xiii. 1 that Paul during his three years' stay at Ephesus (xix. 1 sqq.) made a short visit to Corinth, so that the visit recorded here would be the third one.—**Ver. 3. A plot was laid against him.** Perhaps to surprise and kill him at Cenchreæ (xviii. 18), where many Jews resided, engaged in commerce and therefore in communication and familiar intercourse with the captains and owners of trading vessels from whom they might hear concerning the apostle's intentions and even expect at least connivance at their murderous designs.—**Ver. 4. As far as Asia.** Excepting, of course, the short distance from Philippi to Troas mentioned in the next verse. Two of these seven companions we find with Paul also after he had left Asia Minor (xxi. 29; xxvii. 2); but that is **not** excluded by the summary expression here that speaks of seven. Perhaps because of this, merely apparent, difficulty some copies have omitted the words, *as far as Asia*, whose omission consequently is more easily explained than their insertion. Of those seven companions *Sopater*, *Secundus*, and *Gaius* are mentioned only here; concerning *Timothy* see xvi. 1; *Aristarchus* is

mentioned also xix. 29; xxvii. 2; Col. iv. 10; Philem. 24; *Trophimus* xxi. 29; 2 Tim. iv. 20; *Tychicus* in the letters written during Paul's captivity (Eph. vi. 21; Col. iv. 7) and in his Pastoral Epistles (2 Tim. iv. 12; Tit. iii. 12). According to the order of words where the name of the place first follows (*Beræa*), then precedes (*Thessalonians*), then again follows (*Derbe*), and lastly again precedes (*Asia*), the name of the person, Timothy cannot have been a native of Derbe; his native place is not mentioned at all because he was so well known that it was not necessary. Some suppose that Paul took all these with him to Jerusalem in order to have in them immediate witnesses of his activity in Asia and Europe. Then the word translated *accompanied* would have the sense of *followed*, and the meaning would be that up to Asia Minor these seven men *followed* Paul and Luke and then *went with them* to Jerusalem. That would explain the great number of companions, and also the marginal reading in the next verse; though we do not think that this is the obvious sense of the passage, or in good harmony with the second clause of the next verse (*were waiting*).—Ver. 5. **Had gone before.** The other, well-attested, reading can be rendered, *having come there*. **Us.** Luke again included. (Comp. xvi. 40.) This verse, where evidently Timothy, mentioned in the preceding verse, and belonging to *these* of our present verse, is distinguished from *us*, proves conclusively that he cannot be, as some maintain, the author of Acts or, at least, not of those portions where the writer speaks in the first person plural.—Ver. 6. **Days of unleavened bread.** Comp. Luke xxii. 1. This festival Paul and his immediate companions, perhaps, in Christian liberty (Rom. xiv. 6), to become as Jews to the Jews (1 Cor. ix. 20), had observed with the Jews. And it may be that “the presence of his

Gentile companions who went on before him to Asia (Troas), would have been an hindrance and a stumbling-block to him on this occasion, when he, no doubt, hoped to win some of his dearly-beloved brother Jews to the side of his Master Christ" (*Popular Commentary*). **In five days.** Owing doubtless either to contrary winds, or to a calm. (Comp. xvi. 11.) This detail, as also that of the following clause (*seven days*), proves the accurate knowledge of the author; an impostor would not care, or dare, to go into particulars. **Seven days.** A full week. (Comp. xxi. 4.)—Ver. 7. **The first day of the week.** The second testimony, with regard to age, of the observance of the Lord's day instead, or by the side, of the sabbath, the first being that contained in 1 Cor. xvi. 2 (comp. xix. 22), the third Rev. i. 10. So early the Christians recognized and practised what Paul so forcibly expresses Col. ii. 16, viz. the freedom from all ceremonial precepts. Naturally the first day of the week, in remembrance of the glorious resurrection and justification of Christ (Matt. xxviii. 1; Rom. i. 4; iv. 25), was first observed, in Christian liberty and wisdom, by the Gentile Christians who in themselves could have no motive for assembling on the seventh day or sabbath. Jewish Christians that possessed the proper Christian knowledge and independence also in this respect would observe the day of Christ's resurrection by the side of the sabbath to which they were accustomed, and which in itself could just as well have been retained as the day of regular gathering for public worship, since Christians are neither bound to any particular day nor enjoined from selecting any day. "We should fear and love God that we may not despise preaching and His Word; but hold it sacred, and gladly hear and learn it"—this, in the words of Luther's Small Catechism, is all that the Third Com-



mandment enjoins upon the New Testament children of God who are no more minors and as such tied down to temporary precepts and regulations (Gal. iv. 1-11). The observance of Sunday as the day of public gathering for hearing the Word of God preached and having the sacraments administered is nowhere commanded in the New Testament, and, in view of the character and spirit of the New Testament (comp. also Rom. xiv. 5 sq.), could not be commanded. It is simply and merely an ecclesiastical usage and institution which charity and regard to order (1 Cor. xiv. 40) should move us to respect. That at least one day of the week, i. e. one out of seven, should be appointed as the regular day of public preaching is entirely natural, but not commanded, neither explicitly nor implicitly. The greater the proportion of Gentile Christians became and the more the Jews hardened themselves against the Gospel the more prevalent would the observance of Sunday become. Constantine the Great was the one that made Sunday a legal holiday, and hardly from purely religious motives, A. D. 321. **Break bread.** Comp. ii. 42; 1 Cor. x. 16. "This solemn assembly of disciples met together evidently for no ordinary meal. The 'breaking bread' can only signify the Lord's Supper, the communion of the body and blood of Christ, which, in these early days, seems to have been generally united with the Agape or love-feast. Well-nigh all commentators, Protestant and Roman, are united that this is the signification of this expression." (*Pop. Comm.*) To *break bread* in the first place simply means what the expression says, taken in its literal and usual sense, viz. to do what in oriental countries usually is done in order to divide and distribute the thin, hard, cake-like loaves of bread. (Comp. Matt. xiv. 19; xv. 36; xxvi. 26; Acts xxvii. 35.) Then, however, since it also had been done

by Christ in instituting His Supper, the expression, in a technical sense, came to denote the celebration of this Supper. The context, of course, in every instance must show which one of these two significations obtains at the respective place. **Discoursed.** Or, *reasoned* (comp. xviii. 19); here the notion of continuity and assiduity is implied by the tense (Imperfect). **With them.** Those that had come together, except Luke and the other assistants of Paul; hence not with "*us*." **And prolonged.** As something that would be connected with his purpose.—Ver. 8. **And there were many lights,** etc. Again an evidence that the author of this incident was an eye witness. (Comp. 6.) Because the room was so well lighted everything could and would be noticed. **Upper chamber** (i. 13). **Were gathered.** And stayed together for some time (Pluperfect).—Ver. 9. **Eutychus.** Not further known. Some have supposed that he was a servant, which, however, is not proved by the fact that his name is found as that of slaves and freedmen. He **sat in the window**, i. e. in one of the large openings that, without glass and sometimes even without lattice-work, as a rule in the east do service for our windows. The first meaning of the word in the original is, *a little door*. **Borne down with deep sleep.** Weighed down, overcome, carried away, by deep sleep, sunk in it (the verb used *figuratively*); **borne down by his sleep**, caused to fall down (the verb used in its *literal* sense). The first *borne down* speaks of what was *gradually* taking place: *sinking* into deep sleep (Participle *present*); the second, of what took place *at once* (*Aorist*). **By his sleep.** In consequence, on account of the sleep mentioned. **Yet longer.** Lit. *for a longer* (space of time), viz. than was usual, or, than the young man had expected or could endure. **Dead.** Not, *as* dead, or *for* dead; he was really dead as

the result of his fall.—Ver. 10. **Fell on him, and embracing him.** Comp. 1 Kings xvii. 17 sqq. ; 2 King iv. 32 sqq. **Make ye no ado.** Comp. Mark v. 39. They are not to be troubled in their mind as if this state of death were to continue. **His life.** Or, *soul*. These words have the emphasis, not the following ones, *in him*. By a miracle wrought through Paul the lifeless and soulless body now was again inhabited by its former soul and life. The text does not read or mean, His life is *still* in him, as if Paul had ascertained that by his immediate contact with the body of the youth.—Ver. 11. **When he was gone up.** Viz. into the upper chamber (8). **Had broken the bread.** He continued the service interrupted by the accident. Paul did not expect his hearers to stay and first conclude the whole service before he paid attention to Eutychus—he was no hyperspiritual man, ignoring the feelings and wants of men in this life even though they be the best of Christians. A Christian is a man and regards nothing that is common to man foreign to himself (comp. Rom. xii. 15); monastic apathy and indifference is no Christian virtue at all, much less *the* Christian virtue or ideal. **A long while**, etc. Following the example of our Saviour (John ix. 4). **So.** Not before he had done this, giving them all he could.—Ver. 12. **They brought the lad.** The youth, so young that he could be called almost a child, had evidently required some care and attention to get over the terrible shock which his system had suffered. (Comp. Mark v. 43.) God is sparing in His miracles: He does not perform any except it be necessary for the spiritual welfare of men; and He does not do by miracle what can be done in the natural way, except for a special reason. **Alive.** As a proof of Paul's words (ver. 10). **Not a little.** Lit. *not moderately*, exceedingly.—Ver. 13. **We.** The travelling company

without Paul. **Going before.** Setting out in advance of Paul. This, however, would seem to conflict with ver. 11, where it is stated that Paul *departed*, it being most natural to assume that this *preceded* what is stated vers. 12 and 13. And that may be the reason for the reading "*having gone up to the ship.*" Yet it is not necessary to take *departed* in that sense, viz. as being prior to what ver. 13 relates. It simply concludes the statement concerning Paul before his companions are spoken of. **The ship.** The one that was ready to take them off. **Assos.** A maritime city of Mysia, south of Troas, opposite the island of Lesbos. By land the distance was only some twenty miles. **There.** Lit. *from there.* **Appointed.** Arranged, given orders. Some suppose the reason of this arrangement was Paul's need of bodily exercise; others, some official business. If the surmise expressed above be correct, it does not follow that Paul had no companion at all on this not so very short journey.—Ver. 14. **At.** Lit. *to*; coming *to* Assos, he met us. **Took him in.** Lit. *took him up*, viz. into the ship. **Mitylene.** About thirty miles from Assos, renowned on account of its beautiful situation and magnificent buildings, now called Castro.—Ver. 15. **Having tarried at Trogyllium.** These words are omitted by the best manuscripts, and may have been inserted by a Christian of Asia Minor who knew the locality and was interested in the place; they may have been omitted, again, because this place is opposite Samos, on the coast of Ionia, not far from Ephesus, and it seems strange that if Paul had stopped there he did not send for the elders of Ephesus here rather than at Miletus. To us it seems that the *internal* reasons are in favor of retaining these words, since it is easier to account for their omission than for their insertion. **Miletus.** An old and formerly renowned city,

then outstripped by its older rival Ephesus, situated more than thirty miles south of the latter, now in ruins, at Paul's time still a much-frequented harbor. (Comp. also 2. Tim. iv. 20.)—Ver. 16. **If it were possible for him.** He was not sure whether this was the will of God; the apostles were inspired in those things only that had reference to the preaching of the Gospel, and with regard to other matters they had only occasional revelations.—Ver. 17. **Elders.** Comp. 28; xi. 30.—Ver. 18. **Ye yourselves.** Lit. *ye*, emphatic; others might not know it, *they* did. **From the first day,** etc. To be construed with what follows; from the very beginning he acted in this way, and they, of course, also immediately perceived it. **Was with you.** Comp. vii. 38.—Ver. 19. **Serving.** In entire obedience and loyalty, in no way following his own will or inclination in opposition to that of his divine Master, Christ. **All lowliness of mind.** Humility in all respects and at all times. **Tears.** Pressed out by affliction and concern. **Trials.** Even for the best of Christians persecutions, and afflictions in general, are also trials and temptations, on account of their flesh; not even an apostle was perfect in this regard. (Comp. Phil. iii. 12.)—Ver. 20. **How that,** etc. Explains more fully the "manner" in which he served the Lord. **Profitable.** To salvation, whether Law or Gospel, pleasing or displeasing. (Comp. 1 Cor. vii. 35; x. 23; xii. 7.) Literally the translation of this verse would read, *How I concealed, or, kept back, nothing of that which is profitable in order not to declare it unto you and to teach you,* etc.—Ver. 21. **Testifying.** Affirming solemnly, taking God to witness as to the truthfulness of the assertion; here, *solemnly enjoining.* **Both to Jews,** etc. Lit. *not only to Jews, but also to Greeks,* first to the former, but then also to the latter. (Comp. Rom. i. 16.) The definite article

is omitted because the distinctive quality of the class is to be emphasized: such men as are Jews, and such men as are Greeks. **Repentance toward God.** Lit. *the repentance* that turns *towards God*, by and in which a man turns to God. (Comp. iii. 19; v. 31; viii. 22; xxvi. 20;—Mark i. 15.) **Faith toward.** The *direction* of faith; in other passages the same phrase is rendered *faith in Christ* (xxiv. 24; xxvi. 18; Col. ii. 5), the literal translation being, *faith into Christ*. Here *toward* seems to be taken because of the conformity with *repentance toward God*, the preposition in each case being the same. Repentance, to be true and salutary, must be directed towards God, have Him, His will and pardon, for its object; faith, to be true and saving, must be directed towards Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Christ or Messiah who by His vicarious life, sufferings, and death has made us His own, redeeming us from the power of Satan, sin, and death, must have Him for its object to cling to Him and to rest in Him.—Ver. 22. **Behold.** Announcing something unexpected to them. **Bound in the spirit.** Others translate, *bound by the (Holy) Ghost*, i. e. constrained by Him; but this seems to be precluded by the next verse, where the Holy Ghost is expressly introduced by this, His full name. The two interpretations, however, do not conflict with each other so far as the general sense is concerned: Paul felt constrained in his own spirit because the Holy Ghost constrained his spirit, impressed it with the necessity of going to Jerusalem. **I.** Emphatic, in literal rendering, *bound I in the spirit go*, etc. He felt the necessity if nobody else did. **Befall.** Lit. *meet*, happen.—Ver. 23. **Save.** Except. **Testifieth.** Comp. 21. **Saying.** Through prophets (comp. xiii. 2; xxi. 4, 11); else the words, *in every city*, would be entirely out of place. **Afflictions.** In general, besides the **bonds**. **Abide.** Arc

waiting already.—Ver. 24. **But I hold not my life of any account**, etc. The literal translation would be, *But I do not regard my life worth a word* (speaking of) *for myself*, i. e. as far as I am personally concerned, I would not speak a word to save my life; so willing he is to sacrifice even his life in the service of his Lord and Saviour. **So that I may accomplish**, etc. That is the object for which he is even willing to give up his life. **Course**. A favorite figure of Paul's, signifying the office or ministry of a person, his God-given duties in this life. (Comp. xiii. 25; Gal. ii. 2; 1 Cor. ix. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 7.) **And the ministry**, etc. An explanation of the preceding figurative expression. **Which I received from the Lord Jesus**. Comp. ix. 15; Gal. i. 1. **The grace of God**. The contents of the Gospel, that which makes it Gospel, i. e. glad tidings, to sinful men.—Ver. 25. **Behold**. Comp. 22. **I**. Emphatic: If you do not, I do. **I know**. This expression is a very strong one, and would almost seem to compel us to reject without any further consideration the opinion of ancient and modern exegetes, based especially upon some passages in the pastoral Epistles (e. g. 2 Tim. iv. 20; Tit. i. 5), that Paul came free from his first captivity and was permitted before his second captivity and death at Rome to visit again the churches founded by him in Asia, as also to carry the Gospel to Spain (comp. Rom. xv. 24); but it is not necessary to assume that Paul here speaks of more than a personal feeling and conviction that was not based on a special divine revelation, seeing that in his first captivity he gives expression to his confident hope that he will come free and see his children in the faith again (comp. Phil. i. 23 sqq.; ii. 24; Philem. 22). Comp. 16. **Ye shall see my face no more**. Not, I shall see your face no more; he looks at their loss, not his own, being in all humility conscious of his

office and gifts. (Comp. Rom. xv. 29.) **Ye all among whom I went about.** This seems to favor the opinion that, though first of all, yet not only, the elders of Ephesus were sent for (comp. 17), an opinion that is based on an express statement of Irenæus (adv. hæret. iii. 14, 1 sqq.); though Paul might here embrace more in his view and expression than those whose elders and representatives he saw around him.—Ver. 26. **Wherefore.** The Greek word really means *because*, but seems to have here an unusual signification, whilst in other New Testament passages that are as a rule cited here (Luke i. 13; Acts xviii. 10; Rom. i. 19, 21; iii. 20; viii. 7) the usual meaning is entirely appropriate; 1 Thess. ii. 18, however, is similar to our present passage. **Pure from.** Comp. xviii. 6. **Blood.** Death, eternal perdition; a metonymical expression. **All men.** Literally, and better, *all*, viz. those to whom he had preached the Gospel.—Ver. 27. Comp. 20. So important it is that a minister of the Gospel should be faithful in this regard, loving, fearing, and trusting in God above all things, also in discharging the special duties of his holy office.—Ver. 28. **Take heed.** Pay attention, give the proper care and concern. **Yourselves.** The foundation of all. A minister must first of all be and remain a Christian and prove that also in the discharge of his official duties before he can expect to lead others to Christ and salvation. **Flock.** Viz. of Christ. (Comp. John x. 11 sqq.) **The Holy Ghost.** Although through men (comp. xiv. 23); the one does not exclude the other, but rather includes it—a consolation, but also a warning, for every rightly-called minister of the Gospel. **Bishops.** Comp. 17. From these two verses it is evident that at the time of the apostles there was no essential or official difference between an *elder* and a *bishop*, both terms denoting one and the same person and



office (xi. 30). **Feed.** Lit. *be shepherds*, tend as such, not simply feed, caring for all the wants of the sheep. (Comp. John xxi. 16; 1 Pet. v. 2.) **God.** The reading of the two best manuscripts; perhaps changed in others to *Lord* because to speak of the **own blood** of **God** seemed too strong language; whilst others suppose that the original reading *Lord* was changed to *God* because Paul as a rule speaks of the Church of *God* (1 Cor. xv. 9; Gal. i. 13; 1 Tim. iii. 15), and not of *Christ*, or the *Lord* (only Rom. xvi. 16 in the plural). **Purchased.** Got, acquired for Himself as His property (comp. Eph. i. 14; Tit. ii. 14; 1 Pet. ii. 9), by His atoning death (comp. John x. 11, 17, 18).—Ver. 29. **I.** Emphatic; he knows; if others do not. **Grievous wolves.** Figurative language in keeping with that of the preceding verse (*flock*), denoting dangerous enemies of the church, especially false teachers. (Comp. Matt. vii. 15;—Luke x. 3; John x. 12.) **Grievous.** Violent, cruel, unsparing. **Sparing the flock.** Doing all they can to save it from harm and danger; such men they ought to be, but are not, not caring at all what becomes of the Church, having no compassion on immortal souls whom they destroy by their false doctrine and practice.—Ver. 30. **From among your own selves,** etc. Gentile Christians of Gnostic tendencies appearing already in those early times (comp. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, Ephesians, Titus and Timothy), over against the Judaistic teachers of the preceding verse. **Perverse things.** Perverted truth, false, misleading doctrines. (Comp. Luke xxiii. 2; Acts xiii. 8; Phil. ii. 15.) **The disciples.** Of Christ. (Comp. Matt. xxviii. 19.) After the death of John, who took Paul's place in Asia Minor after the latter's martyrdom, Ephesus became the principal seat of Gnosticism, that mixture of Christian ideas and heathen speculation.

So Paul's prediction came true.—Ver. 31. **Watch.** Be always on your guard, never secure and careless (comp. 1 Cor. xvi. 13; Col. iv. 2; 1 Thess. v. 6); here denoting especially the duty of a shepherd. **By the space.** *For the space.* **Three years.** An approximate statement. (Comp. xix. 10, 22.) **Night.** Put first because then *watching* is most necessary. **Tears.** (Comp. 19.) Paul is the model of a good, conscientious pastor, both as to teaching (20, 27) and to the care of the individual soul (**admonish every one**, etc.).—Ver. 32. **The word of his grace.** Comp. 24. The Gospel, containing, and not only announcing, the grace of God acquired for us by Christ, is the ordinary means through which God works man's salvation, hence, in reality a means of grace, yea, *the* means of grace, making also the sacraments such means. **Which.** Who, viz. God, the principal idea of the preceding clause. **Build up.** Further, promote, and increase in everything that pertains to a Christian individually and the Christian Church in general (comp. Rom. xiv. 19 sq.; Eph. iv. 16), both being represented by the figure of a building erected and completed gradually here on earth. **To give you the inheritance.** The final crowning of the whole work and activity of God and His grace in saving sin-lost men. **Among all them that are sanctified.** Comp. xxvi. 18; Eph. i. 18. Sanctification, i. e. to be sanctified completely by the imputed holiness of Christ and to make a true beginning in personal sanctification, is the only *way* to heaven (Heb. xii. 14); the former is at the same time the *meritorious cause* of our salvation and the *basis* and *fountain* of the latter. —Ver. 33. **Silver, or gold**, etc. These words have the emphasis; Paul was desirous of saving every one, not of obtaining anything from any one. (Comp. xviii. 3; 1 Cor. ix. 4 sqq.; 2 Cor. xi. 7 sqq.; xii. 14 sqq.; 2 Thess. iii.

8 sq.) The special things mentioned here are those that then and there were regarded the most desirable. (Comp. Matt. vi. 19; James v. 2 sq.) **Apparel.** Clothing. **Coveted.** Not, *accepted*; for this he did in some instances where he knew that it would not be misunderstood. (Comp. 2 Cor. xi. 8 sq.) This also shows that he did not consider it improper in itself to accept support as a minister. (Comp. Gal. vi. 6.)—Ver. 34. **Ye yourselves know.** I need not tell you, and you need not simply believe me. **These hands.** Showing them, bearing, as they did, the marks of hard work. **Ministered.** Rendered service in supplying what was necessary. **Necessities.** Not, *luxury*; the latter least of all a minister should want. **To them.** Briefly, for *unto the necessities of them*.—Ver. 35. **Gave you an example.** Lit. *Showed you by placing under your eyes*, taught you by my own example—the most effective teaching imaginable. **How that.** Antiquated now for the simple *that*. **So.** As I have done. **Labouring.** Lit. *toiling*, working so as to get weary, tired, exhausted. To work thus every pastor must be willing, though it need not be with his hands like Paul. **Help.** Assist, succor. **The weak.** In a spiritual sense, those that could have been offended if Paul had acted otherwise. (Comp. Rom. xiv. 1; xv. 1; 1 Cor. ix. 22.) **How.** *That*; some render it, *because*, or, *for*, which is permissible so far as the form of the word in the original is concerned. Still, in our opinion, the former rendering is more natural. The sentence cited here, as also in some post-apostolical writings, is, of course, a part of authentic tradition, sanctioned and warranted by the Holy Spirit Himself through Paul, and may be meant to be simply an example of those sayings of Christ that have reference to the point spoken of. Then **the words** would not simply mean the sentence

cited. **It is more blessed**, etc., or, *It is rather blessed to give than to receive*. If you compare both, giving and receiving, and ask, which of the two is blessed, the answer must be, Rather giving than receiving. Both interpretations make good sense; we prefer the former. **Blessed**. Happy. The action itself is called what in reality is the attribute of him that performs it.—Ver. 36. The Christian way of taking leave forever and assuaging the grief naturally accompanying it.—Ver. 37: **They all wept sore**. Lit. *Considerable*, or, *much*, *weeping of all took place*. **Kissed him**. Lit. *kissed him again and again*, tenderly. (Comp. Matt. xxvi. 49.)—Ver. 38. **Sorrowing**, etc. Lit. *feeling pain*, or, *distress*, *most of all on account of the word*. (Comp. 25.) **Behold**. With delight; not simply, *see* (25). The latter is the word Paul in his humility used; the former, the word that expresses the feelings of his hearers. **Brought him**. Accompanied, escorted him. (Comp. xv. 3; xxi. 5.) The form of the verb (Imperfect) depicts the reluctance to separate from the beloved teacher.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### (A.) PAUL'S JOURNEY FROM MILETUS TO JERUSALEM.

1-16. And when it came to pass that we were parted from them, and had set sail, we came with a straight course unto Cos, and the next day unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara : and having found a ship crossing over unto Phœnicia, we went aboard, and set sail. And when we had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left hand, we sailed unto Syria, and landed at Tyre : for there the ship was to unlade her burden. And having found the disciples, we tarried there seven days : and these said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not set foot in Jerusalem. And when it came to pass that we had accomplished the days, we departed and went on our journey ; and they all, with wives and children, brought us on our way, till we were out of the city : and kneeling down on the beach, we prayed, and bade each other farewell ; and we went on board the ship, but they returned home again.

And when we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais ; and we saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day. And on the morrow we departed, and came unto Cæsarea : and entering into the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we abode with him. Now this man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy. And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judæa a certain prophet, named Agabus. And coming to us, and taking Paul's girdle, he bound his own feet and hands, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we and they of that place besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart ? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

And after these days we took up our baggage, and went up to Jerusalem. And there went with us also *certain* of the disciples from Cæsarea, bringing *with them* one Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we should lodge.

After the heart-rending leave-taking from the elders of Ephesus Paul and his companions sailed directly to the Island of Cos, the next day reached Rhodes, and then came to Patara, having taken first a southerly and then an easterly direction (1). At Patara Paul changed ships, embarking on one bound directly for Phœnicia (2). At the important island of Cyprus they did not stop at all, but merely came in sight of it, sailing south of it in a straight direction to Syria and there landed at the formerly so celebrated port of Tyre, for which the cargo was intended (3). With the seemingly small number of Christians here they stayed a whole week, until the ship was ready to continue its voyage. These fellow-believers tried to persuade Paul not to go to Jerusalem since the Holy Ghost had revealed to them that he would meet there with severe persecutions; but they could not prevail upon him, as he was convinced that it was the will of God that he should go there, whatever might betide him (4). When at last the travellers could leave, the whole congregation, old and young, accompanied them to the sea beach and there prayed with them (5); so much they had come to love them. At Ptolemais the voyage was completed. Having stayed there a day with the Christians (7), Paul and his companions went by land to Cæsarea and there remained for some days with Philip, one of the first deacons and afterwards an evangelist or missionary (8). He had four virgin daughters that possessed the gift of prophecy and, no doubt, also exercised it now with regard to the fate awaiting Paul (9). Furthermore, during their stay there also a prophet from Judæa came, by the name of Agabus (10), and by a symbolical action emphasized his prophetic declaration that Paul in Jerusalem would be seized by the Jews as a criminal and turned over into the hands of the Roman

government (11). Then all combined in entreating Paul to desist from carrying out his purpose of going to Jerusalem (12). But he mildly rebuked them for doing all they could to discourage him from doing his duty, as he saw it, and declared his invincible determination, if necessary, even to die for the blessed Gospel of his Lord and Saviour (13). And his well-meaning fellow-believers could not but quietly submit to the evident will of their common Master (14). Having made all the necessary preparations, Paul and his companions then went up to Jerusalem (15), accompanied by some Christians from Cæsarea who brought them to an early disciple of Christ, a countryman of Barnabas, with whom they were to take up their abode in Jerusalem (16).

Ver. 1. **We were parted from them.** Lit. *having torn ourselves away from them.* (Comp. Luke xxii. 41.) **Cos.** About forty miles south of Miletus, famous then for its wine and fabrics, with a celebrated temple of Æsculapius and a renowned school of medicine, as also with many Jewish residents, now called Ko, or Stanchio. **Rhodes.** About fifty miles southeast of Cos, an island noted for its delightful climate and its importance for the trade between the east and west. At the time of Paul the renowned Colossus had already been destroyed by an earthquake. Enjoying some freedom during the days of the Roman empire and having a bright name in the history of the Crusades, it now belongs to Asiatic Turkey, retaining the name, but scarcely anything else, of olden times and fame. **Patara.** East of Rhodes, at that time a considerable maritime city of Lydia, famous also on account of an oracle of Apollo, now in ruins.—Ver. 2. **Crossing over.** On its way to cross over, ready and about to do so.—Ver. 3. **Cyprus.** Comp. xi. 19; xiii. 4; xv. 39; xxvii. 4;—iv. 36; xi. 20; xxi. 16. **Syria.**

The Roman province embracing also Phœnicia and Palestine. **Tyre.** "In Paul's days the glory of Tyre, as described in the prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel, had long since faded. Its merchants were no more princes. The modern cities of Antioch and Cæsarea had proved successful rivals to the old capital of Phœnicia. In honor of its ancient grandeur the Roman emperor gave it the privilege of a 'free city.' It retained a considerable position among cities, however, until the close of the thirteenth century, when it was taken and destroyed by the Saracens. It has never risen since that awful ruin above the condition of a wretched village. It now, indeed, fulfils the old prophecy, and is literally, with its shapeless ruins by the sea, only 'a place to spread nets upon'" (Ezek. xxvi. 14). (*Popular Commentary*.) **There the ship was to unload,** etc. Lit. *Thither the ship was unloading her freight*, i. e. for that place the ship was bound, and having arrived there, she was now unloading.—Ver. 4. **Found.** Found out by search; hence, there must have been at least a comparatively small number in the large city. How Christians came to be there at all is explained in part xi. 19; xv. 3. **Tarried there seven days.** Apparently on account of the ship. **Through the Spirit.** The knowledge of Paul's fate was given them through the Holy Ghost, and in their love to Paul they looked upon this revelation as given them for the purpose of warning Paul; except for this revelation they would not have had any reason for their warning, and therefore the brief expression can be, They warned him through the Holy Ghost. Paul understood better the intention of the Holy Ghost in making these revelations, viz. to prepare him and his fellow-Christians for his fate. (Comp. xx. 22 sq.) **Set foot in Jerusalem.** Not even that, keep entirely away in order to avoid the



danger.—Ver. 5. **Accomplished.** Finished, brought to an end; the time they had to wait seemed long to them, since Paul hurried to get to Jerusalem (xx. 16). **They all.** Also an indication of the smallness of the congregation. **Brought us on our way.** Comp. xx. 38.—Ver. 6. **The ship.** In our view the same that had brought them to Tyre, wherewith the definite article is in best accord, though this could mean simply the special ship which now was to receive them. (Comp. xx. 38.) Since the distance from Tyre to Ptolemais was scarcely more than that from the latter place to Cæsarea and could just as well be made by land, some suppose that the stay at Tyre was not solely occasioned by the waiting for the departure of the ship, but also, if not mainly, by the desire of the brethren to have Paul stay with them as long as possible and his reluctance to refuse them, and, perhaps, even a struggle within him between the two opposing influences that were brought to bear upon him (comp. 13; Phil. i. 23 sq.), in which struggle he proved himself a true disciple of Christ by humbly and willingly submitting to the will of God, though also in him a willing spirit had to overcome a weak flesh. (Comp. xx. 36; xxi. 5; Matt. xxvi. 39, 42, 44, 41.) But verse 4 makes the impression that some external obstacle prevented Paul from continuing his journey immediately, which most naturally is supposed to have been the unloading and reloading of the ship, and that on account of this they looked up the disciples. It may be, however, that then the causes mentioned above had something to do with their waiting so long and not taking another ship or going by land. There is certainly not the least necessity of asserting a discrepancy between the intention of Paul as stated xx. 16 and his conduct during the journey. (Comp. also 10.)—Ver. 7. **Ptolemais.** The ancient

Acco (Judges i. 31), retaining even now its old name with the Arabs, by western nations called Jean d'Acre, often mentioned in the history of the crusades, now counting about 15,000 inhabitants. The better translation here seems to be, *But we, having entirely completed our voyage, arrived from Tyre at Ptolemais.* The *voyage*, from Macedonia on (xx. 6), Tyre having been the last stopping-place, was now ended; from now on they went by land.

**One day.** No longer, there being no special reason for it.—Ver. 8. **Cæsarea.** Comp. viii. 40. **Philip the evangelist.** Comp. viii. 5, 40. An *evangelist* was a missionary assisting the apostles in spreading the Gospel, having no special charge. **One of the seven.** Comp. vi. 4 sq. Some translate, *Who was the evangelist of the seven*, who of those seven was in a special sense the evangelist and hence also bore this name. The common rendering seems preferable because most natural. The position of Philip seems to have been the reason why they stayed with him for some time notwithstanding the eagerness of Paul to get to Jerusalem (xx. 16), as Paul here could get the best information with regard to the state of affairs at Jerusalem.—Ver. 9. **Which did prophesy.** Comp. ii. 17; xi. 27. This statement denotes the gift that they possessed, not necessarily the exercise of that gift just at that time; but it is difficult to explain why this notice should be introduced here, if their gift had not been exercised in this connection.—Ver. 10. **Many days.** Lit. *more days*, viz. than might be expected, *several*.

**Came down.** Jerusalem was situated higher, both with regard to location and dignity; and so was Judæa.

**Prophet.** Comp. xi. 27. **Agabus.** No doubt the same that is mentioned xi. 28, the expression here, *a certain prophet from Judæa*, being used without any regard to the former mention of him made so long before.—Ver. 11.

**Taking.** Lit. *taking up*, viz. from the ground or wherever Paul had put it. **His own.** Not Paul's, though with Paul's girdle. He did this binding, of course, in two separate actions. (Comp. John xxi. 18 ;—Isa. xx. ; Jer. xiii. ; xix. ; Ez. iv.) **Thus saith the Holy Ghost.** Through me, his organ.—Ver. 12. **Both we and they.** Lit. *not only we but also they*. **That place.** Cæsarea.—Ver. 13. **What do ye, weeping,** etc. Consider what you are doing by weeping. The same sense would be expressed, though not so emphatically, by the question : Why do you weep, etc. **Breaking my heart.** Depriving me of strength and courage, dispiriting, incapacitating me for enduring trials (*Grimm-Thayer*) ; would it not be better to understand it of causing extreme *grief* and *sorrow* on account of not being able to accede to their request ? That they cannot *discourage* him, seems to be the express sense of the next clause : **I** (emphatic, over against them and others) **am ready**, etc. **At Jerusalem.** Lit. *to Jerusalem*, i. e. having gone and arrived there. **The name of the Lord Jesus.** Comp. ii. 38.—Ver. 14. **Ceased.** Were quiet, silent, said no more to move him. **Of the Lord.** Emphatic, hence better, *The Lord's will be done*. **Lord.** Christ.—Ver. 15. **We took up our baggage.** Lit. *having made ready*, viz. the things needed for the journey, on account of the approaching festival and a longer stay at Jerusalem. Others, who think that, because of the manifold delay on the journey, they were too late for the festival (comp. xx. 16), understand it as referring to the rest and recreation enjoyed at Cæsarea and so much needed in order to undergo all the excitement and trouble at Jerusalem.—Ver. 16. **Mnason.** The Greek name suggests a Gentile Christian, or at least a Hellenist, or "Grecian Jew." (Comp. vi. 1.) **An early disciple.** Converted, perhaps, by Barnabas, his countryman (iv. 36) or Paul. (Comp. xiii. 4 sqq.)

## (B.) PAUL'S RECEPTION AT JERUSALEM ON THE PART OF HIS FELLOW-CHRISTIANS (A. D. 59).

17-26. And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. And when he had saluted them, he rehearsed one by one the things which God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. And they, when they heard it, glorified God; and they said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of them which have believed; and they are all zealous for the law: and they have been informed concerning thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. What is it therefore? they will certainly hear that thou art come. Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; these take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges for them, that they may shave their heads: and all shall know that there is no truth in the things whereof they have been informed concerning thee; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, keeping the law. But as touching the Gentiles which have believed, we wrote, giving judgment that they should keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what is strangled, and from fornication. Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them went into the temple, declaring the fulfilment of the days of purification, until the offering was offered for every one of them.

At Jerusalem Paul and his companions were received with joy by Mnason and other fellow-Christians whom they happened to meet (17), and on the following day they went to see the leader of the church at Jerusalem, James, where also the other elders came together (18). Having heard from Paul himself in detail what blessed work God had permitted him to do among the heathen (19), they gave thanks and praise to God, but at the same time held it their duty to apprise Paul of the attitude of the great number of Jewish Christians towards him. Notwithstanding their faith in Jesus as the Christ they still clung to their former mode of religious life, observing the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament as before, though not attaching any merit thereto, and holding that

to be the proper course for a Christian of Jewish descent (20). Now they had been told by Judaizing teachers that Paul was commanding Jewish Christians to omit their former customs, above all circumcision—a malicious exaggeration of the doctrine of Paul that the observance of the Mosaic law was not necessary to salvation, and hence should not be required of the Gentiles that became Christians (21). As to the natural question what had best be done under the peculiar circumstances, since the people will hear of Paul's presence and surely flock together to hear and observe him (22), James and the others point to the fact that four members of the congregation there have a vow upon themselves (23), and advise him to make himself a partaker in that vow for the rest of the time and then do what was considered a specially charitable and pious work, pay the expenses required to complete the vow and to be absolved from it; thus every one would know that the charges preferred against him were without all foundation (24). This, however, was not to be understood as abrogating in the least what had been decreed by the first Christian council as the attitude of the Gentile Christians towards the Mosaic law (25). Paul, seeing that he could do what was suggested without sacrificing any Gospel principle, followed the advice of the brethren and went to the temple to announce to the proper priestly authorities that the time of their vow was at an end and that the usual sacrifices would be offered by each of them (26).

Ver. 18. **Paul.** The principal person; not simply, *we*. **James.** The brother of the Lord. (Comp. xii. 17.) If this assumption be correct, none of the apostles were in the city at that time, since otherwise they would have been the very persons to be mentioned here. **Elders.** Comp. xi. 30.—Ver. 19. **Rehearsed.** Related in detail, recount-

ed. **God had wrought.** Note the humility of this foremost worker among the apostles manifested everywhere. (Comp. 1 Cor. xv. 10.)—Ver. 20. **Seest.** Beholdest, with astonishment and joy. **Brother.** They regard him in the proper light and assure him of this before they speak of the attitude of others who take a different view. **Thousands.** Lit. *myriads*, or, ten thousands; a popular expression for a great number. (Comp. Luke xii. 1; 1 Cor. iv. 15.) **Have believed.** Have come to believe and now are believers (Perfect). **And they are all zealous for the law.** An independent clause, not to be connected with, *Thou seest.* **Zealous for the law.** Men who are careful and scrupulous in observing the ceremonial law and defending their position as the correct one (Comp. Gal. i. 14.)—Ver. 21. **Informed.** *Taught, instructed*, namely by the Judaistic teachers and opponents of Paul who made it a part of their instruction to decry Paul and his teaching; not simply, *told*. The same word is found, e. g. xviii. 25; Luke i. 4; Rom. ii. 18. **To forsake Moses.** Lit. *apostasy*, defection, *from Moses*, leaving and neglecting his laws and ordinances. Both words, *apostasy* and *Moses*, are emphatic: *apostasy*, ugly in itself, and from *Moses*, the mediator of the Old Testament. **Neither.** In general; circumcision was the basis and promise of the fulfilment of the whole ceremonial law (Gal. v. 3). **Customs.** Religious observances and rites. That Paul was no fanatical opponent of the ceremonial law, neglecting and forbidding its observance indiscriminately and absolutely, is shown by his whole conduct (e. g. xvi. 3; xviii. 18; xxi. 26). Jewish Christians who simply retained their former customs because they were used to them, without regarding the observance of them as necessary and meritorious, were never by him urged to discontinue them; but as soon as the observance of the ceremonial

law was to be imposed as binding upon Christians he protested energetically, showing forth the necessary consequences, viz. the abolition of the New Testament economy and the re-establishment of that of the Old. (Comp. Rom. xiv. 1 sqq.; Gal. i. 3 sqq.; v. 1 sqq.)—Ver. 22. **What is it therefore.** What then is the state of affairs? and, consequently, what should be done? (Comp. Rom. iii. 9; 1 Cor. xiv. 15.) **The multitude must come together; for.** These words of the A. V. are omitted by the best manuscripts. They seem to be a gloss, occasioned perhaps by verse 27 or xv. 4, and then copied into the text. The literal rendering, moreover, would be, *a multitude*, not, *the multitude*; and that could hardly be understood of a *meeting* of all the Christians. But if that cannot be the sense, the word **must** seems entirely too strong; for neither *necessity* nor *duty* and *obligation* can be predicated of the coming together of a multitude eager for seeing and watching Paul.—Ver. 23. **Therefore.** To meet the case and to act in accordance with the circumstances. **This that we say to thee.** They emphasize that what he is to do is their advice to him and according to their view the best, if not the only, way out of the difficulty. Perhaps they were a little doubtful whether he would be willing to execute their plan. **A vow.** No doubt, similar to the one mentioned xviii. 18.—Ver. 24. **Take.** To thyself, with thyself, join to thyself. **Purify thyself.** *Consecrate thyself* to God by a vow. The original has here the same word that Num. vi. 2 sqq. is used by the Septuagint for, *separate himself*, i. e. from common life, dedicating himself to God and His service in a special way, by a vow. **Purify thyself with them.** Take their vow upon thyself. (Comp. Numb. vi. 2 sqq.) The regulation concerning food would especially apply to Paul for so short a time. **Be at charges.** Incur expenses,

spend, pay. **That they may shave their heads.** And thus complete their vow, become free from it. (Comp. Numb. vi. 13 sqq.) These four men were evidently too poor to furnish the sacrifices necessary in order to be absolved from their vow. **No truth.** Lit. *nothing*; nothing was in existence of that which Paul had been charged with by his opponents. **Informed.** Comp. 21. **Thou thyself.** Not simply permitting others to observe the law, but even keeping it thyself. **Walkest orderly, keeping, etc.** Lit. *walkest, keeping, etc.*, i. e. walkest as one does who keeps the law. **Walkest.** Livest, conductest thyself. (Comp. Gal. v. 25.)—Ver. 25. Comp. xv. 19-29. **Have believed.** Comp. 20. **We.** Emphatic; that was their own action, and they still recognized it as correct. This *they* had done, made a concession, so to say, from the standpoint of Jewish Christians by not asking more; now *Paul* was asked to do something which could be regarded as a sort of concession from the standpoint of Gentile Christians. He is reminded of the former in order to make it easier for him to grant the latter. **Giving judgment.** Lit. *after having judged*, or resolved, decreed, come to the conclusion.—Ver. 26. **Took.** Comp. 24. **Purifying himself.** Lit. *having purified himself*, by taking part in their vow as far as he could. **Temple.** One of the courts, probably that of the Israelites, not the temple proper. (Comp. ii. 46.) **Declaring.** Viz. to the officiating priest (Numb. vi. 16). **The fulfilment, etc.** This may mean, either that the vows were now fulfilled, or that the fulfilment was near; in the former case the seven days mentioned in the next verse would be the days necessary for offering the different sacrifices for all of them, the time not being the same for all; in the latter case those seven days would be those that still were to be observed in the fulfilment of the vow,



including, perhaps, the day or days necessary for the sacrifices. The former seems to us to be the most natural interpretation. **Until the offering was offered**, etc. So far the purification or vow had been fulfilled that it was only necessary to offer the customary sacrifices. Others construe this clause with the words, *Purifying himself with them went into the temple*: this he continued to do *until the offering was offered for every one of them*. Thus the words, *Declaring the fulfilment of the days of purification*, would be a sort of parenthesis. Still others translate, *Declaring that he would fulfil the days of purification until the offering would be offered for every one of them*. And still others insert the words, *and stayed there* (waited in the holy enclosure), before, *until the offering*, etc. In our opinion the first interpretation is to be preferred; the mood of the verb (Indicative, not Optative or Subjunctive [xxiii. 12]) is chosen from the standpoint of Luke the historian, not of Paul.

### (C.) PAUL TAKEN PRISONER.

27-40. And when the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the multitude, and laid hands on him, crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place: and moreover he brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath defiled this holy place. For they had before seen with him in the city Trophimus the Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple. And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they laid hold on Paul, and dragged him out of the temple: and straightway the doors were shut. And as they were seeking to kill him, tidings came up to the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in confusion. And forthwith he took soldiers and centurions, and ran down upon them: and they, when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, left off beating Paul. Then the chief captain came near, and laid hold on him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and inquired who he was, and what he had done. And some shouted one thing, some another, among the crowd: and when he could not know the certainty for the uproar, he commanded

him to be brought into the castle. And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the crowd; for the multitude of the people followed after, crying out, Away with him.

And as Paul was about to be brought into the castle, he saith unto the chief captain, May I say something unto thee? And he said, Dost thou know Greek? Art thou not then the Egyptian, which before these days stirred up to sedition and led out into the wilderness the four thousand men of the Assassins? But Paul said, I am a Jew, of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and I beseech thee, give me leave to speak unto the people. And when he had given him leave, Paul, standing on the stairs, beckoned with the hand unto the people; and when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew language, saying,

When the seven days necessary for the sacrifices were nearly at an end, the Jews from Asia Minor that were present in Jerusalem and had always shown a hostile spirit towards Paul, with amazement and anger saw him on the temple grounds, and, stirring up all that were there, seized him (27), calling upon the Jews, as members of the people of God, to assist them in preventing this avowed enemy of all that was holy to them from continuing in his nefarious career, seeing that in his impious audacity he had even dared to profane the sanctuary by taking heathen into that part of the holy place that was expressly reserved for the people of Israel (28). This latter charge was nothing but an unwarranted assumption based on the fact that some time before they had seen one of Paul's travelling companions, a Gentile Christian from Ephesus, with him in the city (29). The consequence of this outcry was a commotion throughout the whole city and a concourse of the people who seized Paul with the intention of putting him to death and thus getting rid of him; but in order not to defile the holy place with human blood they dragged him out of the temple grounds, whereupon the temple guards immediately closed the gates (30). Whilst the furious mob

was now trying to carry out their murderous designs, some one informed the chief commander of the Roman garrison of Jerusalem that the whole city was in an uproar (31). He, in accordance with his duty to keep the city quiet, forthwith took some soldiers with their captains and hastened to see what the trouble was; and this, of course, put an end to the lawless proceedings of the mob (32). The commander now took Paul and, supposing him to be guilty of some grievous crime, had him chained to two soldiers, as the Roman fashion was in such cases, and then asked the crowd as to his person and his crime (33). But not being able to get a satisfactory answer from the excited and blindly fanatical crowd, he had Paul brought into the barracks (34). So great, however, was the violence of the infuriated mob, intent upon the death of Paul, that the soldiers had to carry him up the steps that led to the castle (35 sq.). Before he was taken into the barracks connected with the castle Paul publicly asked the officer for permission to speak to him. The latter was astonished to hear Paul speak Greek in such a fluent and polite manner (37), and asked him whether he was not, as he had supposed, the notorious Egyptian that pretended to be a prophet sent to deliver the Jews from the bondage of the Romans, but in reality was nothing but the leader of a band of bandits, so common at that time, and whom the Roman governor Felix had defeated to the joy of the Jews, whose lot only became worse by such lawless risings (38). Paul told the commander that he was no Egyptian at all, but a Cilician, native of a well-known city, and asked for permission to address the people (39). This permission was given, no doubt in the hope that Paul would be able to satisfy the crowd by his explanation; and the crowd, curious to hear what Paul could have to say, in deep

silence listened to the beginning of his address made in their native tongue (40).

Ver. 27. **The seven days.** Comp. 26. **Were almost completed.** Lit. *were about to be completed.* Some suppose that these seven days were those of the Pentecost festival, of which the last one is asserted to have been the festival proper. But this supposition has no foundation in the text, according to which, because of its very silence as to this festival, we must conclude that Paul's desire to celebrate that festival at Jerusalem (xx. 16) was not fulfilled. **Asia.** Comp. ii. 9; xix. 8 sq.; xx. 19. **Temple.** Comp. 26. **Stirred up.** To tumult and uproar.—Ver. 28. **Men of Israel.** Comp. ii. 29. **This place.** Comp. vi. 13. They put his offence in the strongest way possible, mentioning all the objects of his hostile teaching and stating that this teaching extends to all men in all places. **And moreover also.** So far he has now gone, though it is only a natural consequence of his former hostile conduct. (Comp. xix. 27.) **Greeks.** Seemingly the plural of category, as in the next verse only one is mentioned. **And hath defiled,** etc. By doing so. The Perfect denotes that in consequence of his impious action the holy place is now in a state of defilement. Gentiles were only permitted to enter the outer court named after them, not the Court of the Israelites.—Ver. 29. **They had before seen.** And what they had seen was still in their minds and, so to say, in their eyes; lit. *they were having seen before.* **The Ephesian.** Hence, they, being from Asia Minor, knew him. (Comp. xx. 4.) **Supposed.** That was their opinion, not merely an idea that struck them.—Ver. 30. **Moved.** Excited, disturbed, thrown into commotion. **Dragged him out of the temple.** Not in order to prevent him from taking refuge at the altar, as some have supposed; for

that was a privilege granted only to involuntary homicides. (Ex. xxi. 13 sq.; 1. Kings ii. 28 sqq.) **The doors.** The gates of the temple place. **Were shut.** To prevent the return of Paul and the mob. The Levites had charge of the whole place and hence also of the gates.—Ver. 31. **And.** Something naturally connected with what precedes. **Chief captain.** Lit. *commander of a thousand*, having a rank about equal to that of our colonels, tribune of a Roman cohort, or **band.** The original for the latter expression really meant the thirtieth part of a legion (about 6000 soldiers), or the third part of a cohort (600), hence only 200 men; but in later Greek it seems to have been used as an equivalent of the Latin *cohors*. The Roman garrison was stationed in the fortress Antonia, a castle overlooking the temple and its courts and connected with the temple grounds by two flights of steps. Built by the Maccabean, or Asmonean, princes for a residence under the name of Baris, it had been rebuilt by Herod the Great in a rather splendid way and called Antonia, after Mark Antony, the Roman Triumvir. It stood at the northwest corner of the temple place. The name of the commander of the Roman garrison at that time was Claudius Lysias. (xxiii. 26.) **In confusion.** Lit. *was being stirred up*. (Comp. 27.)—Ver. 32. **Centurions.** Lit. *commanders of a hundred*, our captains. The *band* consisted at least of two, possibly of six or even more, *centuriæ*, or companies, each commanded by a *centurio*. **Ran down.** From the castle.—Ver. 33. **Laid hold on him.** Took possession of him, so that he was no more in the power of the mob, but also in that of the legal authority. **Bound with two chains.** As a dangerous criminal. (Comp. 38.) The chaining had the object of preventing his escape. **Who he was.** Lit. *who he might be*; this not being necessarily known by those who

witnessed his crime. **What he had done.** The commander considered it as certain that he had committed something grievous, was a criminal (Perfect, Indicative).—Ver. 34. **Shouted.** Continually (Imperfect). **And when he could not know,** etc. Though it should be expected that this would be the case (*subjective* negation). **The certainty.** Lit. *that which was reliable*; he could not get reliable information. **For the uproar.** On account of the uproar and noise. **Castle.** Better, *barracks*, viz. of the Roman soldiers in the castle Antonia.—Ver. 35. **Stairs.** Leading up to the castle from the temple area. **So it was.** Lit. it happened, came to pass. **For.** Because of, on account of. (Comp. 34.)—Ver. 36. **Followed after.** In one continuous stream (Imperfect). **Away with him.** Comp. Luke xxiii. 18; Acts xxii. 22.—Ver. 37. **And.** Comp. 31. **Castle.** 34. **May I say.** The form implying doubt and uncertainty (comp. xix. 2); lit. *Is it permitted me to say.* **Greek.** Emphatic; lit. *Greek thou understandest?* The commander evidently supposed Paul to be a man without all culture, hardly able to speak his vernacular language correctly, much less the highly cultured Greek.—Ver. 38. **Art thou not then.** etc. Lit. *not then*, as I supposed, *thou* (emphatic) *art*, etc. **The Egyptian.** Also mentioned twice by Josephus, the Jewish historian, a younger contemporary of Paul. He intended to destroy the rule of the Romans and promised his adherents gathered in the desert that at his word the walls of Jerusalem would fall down, and led them on to Mount Olivet to witness this miracle and then with him enter the city over the ruins. Felix killed 400 and took 200 prisoners; the rest escaped with their leader. So Josephus relates. **Four thousand men.** Josephus mentions in one passage 30,000 men, meaning, perhaps, another occasion and all those that followed the

Egyptian, not simply those that were armed. **Assassins.** The Greek word is merely another form of the Latin *sicarii*, i. e. assassins or murderers who carried a *sica*, a curved dagger or poniard, beneath their clothing, which in a crowd could be used with fatal effect without being previously noticed. In those lawless times they were often hired by leaders of factions for purposes of murder. The commandant supposed that this dangerous man, after some time of seclusion, had dared to appear in Jerusalem and had been seized by the indignant populace.—Ver. 39. **I.** Emphatic, in apposition to the person he was supposed to be. **Jew.** Lit. *Jewish man*, of no other nation. **Tarsus.** Comp. ix. 11. **No mean city.** A not unusual litotes, for, *a city of some renown*—an expression of patriotic sentiment. **And I beseech thee**, etc. Lit. *I am, indeed, a Jew*, etc., hence a prisoner by mistake; *but I beseech thee*, etc. Though he was not the criminal the Romans supposed him to be, he desired to address his own people, since these did not labor under the same mistake as the Romans and still were his enemies.—Ver. 40. **Was made.** Lit. *had taken place*, had ensued. **Hebrew.** Really, Aramaic, a sister dialect of the Hebrew and at that time the vernacular of the country. (Comp. i. 19; xxii. 2; John xix. 20.)

## CHAPTER XXII.

### PAUL'S DEFENCE BEFORE THE PEOPLE.

1-30. Brethren and fathers, hear ye the defence which I now make unto you.

And when they heard that he spake unto them in the Hebrew language, they were the more quiet : and he saith,

I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, even as ye all are this day : and I persecuted this Way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders : from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and journeyed to Damascus, to bring them also which were there unto Jerusalem in bonds, for to be punished. And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and drew nigh unto Damascus, about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord ? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. And they that were with me beheld indeed the light, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. And I said, What shall I do, Lord ? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus ; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came unto Damascus. And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well reported of by all the Jews that dwelt there, came unto me, and standing by me said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And in that very hour I looked up on him. And he said, The God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know his will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from his mouth. For thou shalt be a witness for him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou ? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name. And it came to pass, that, when I had returned to Jerusalem, and while I prayed in the temple, I fell into a trance, and saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and



get thee quickly out of Jerusalem : because they will not receive of thee testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they themselves know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee : and when the blood of Stephen thy witness was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting, and keeping the garments of them that slew him. And he said unto me, Depart : for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles.

And they gave him audience unto this word ; and they lifted up their voice, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth : for it is not fit that he should live. And as they cried out, and threw off their garments, and cast dust into the air, the chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, bidding that he should be examined by scourging, that he might know for what cause they so shouted against him. And when they had tied him up with the thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man, that is a Roman, and uncondemned ? And when the centurion heard it, he went to the chief captain, and told him, saying, What art thou about to do ? for this man is a Roman. And the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman ? And he said, Yea. And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this citizenship. And Paul said, But I am a *Roman* born. They then which were about to examine him straightway departed from him : and the chief captain also was afraid, when he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

But on the morrow, desiring to know the certainty, wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him, and commanded the chief priests and all the council to come together, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.

Addressing his hearers of all stations in life in the same familiar, conciliatory way which about twenty-five years ago he had heard Stephen, the first Christian martyr, use, Paul asked them to listen to what he had to say to them in his defence (1). His use of their cherished mother-tongue, manifesting, as it did, his inclination not to offend them unnecessarily, made them the more willing to accede to his request (2.) And now he gave them a summary of his life that could prove to them that what he had been doing had its source not in any hostile or indifferent feeling towards his people and their Law, but solely in the manifest guidance and express command of

his and their God. He also is a member of the people of God, not born, indeed, in the land of promise, but educated in the holy city itself, a disciple of their renowned teacher Gamaliel, and brought up in the very strictness of the Law once given to their fathers by God Himself, as full of zeal for this God and His Law as they are at the present day (3). In this zeal he went so far as even to persecute unto the death all those that, as he then imagined, contrary to the Law regarded and worshipped Jesus of Nazareth as the divine Leader to salvation (4). For the truth of this statement he could appeal to the high priest himself and to the whole Grand Council from whom he had even accepted the commission to go to the Jews at Damascus and with their assistance bring to Jerusalem for judgment and punishment the followers of Christ that might be found there (5). Thus there was surely no predisposition or inclination on his part to desert the religion of his people and follow the despised and crucified Jesus of Nazareth; but he had been compelled to do so, if he did not want wilfully to resist God Himself. Jesus Himself in His heavenly exaltation appeared to him on his way to Damascus, rebuked him for persecuting Him in His disciples, and commanded him to go to Damascus for further instruction (6-10). Being blinded by the splendor of the heavenly appearance, he was led to Damascus, miraculously cured of his blindness by a man of Israel to whom his own people could not but give the best of testimony, and told that it was by the will and ordinance of the God of Israel that he had seen and heard the Messiah Himself in His heavenly glory because he was to be one of His Apostles (11-15); and that hence he was now to confess Christ Jesus as his divine Redeemer and then to enter His Church by receiving forgiveness of sins through the divinely-ap-

pointed means of baptism (16). After he had spent some time in Arabia and then had been forced to leave Damascus, he came back to Jerusalem, intending to preach to his own people the heavenly truth so miraculously revealed to him. But while praying there in the temple court, in an ecstatic condition he again saw Christ, who told him to leave Jerusalem at once, because there his testimony concerning what he had seen and heard of Christ Himself would not be accepted (17 sq.). And although he ventured to reply that in his humble opinion the very fact of his being known as one of the most fanatical persecutors of the Christians from the beginning would make him a witness whose divinely-wrought conversion and honest conviction could not be doubted by any one (19 sq.), Christ had insisted on his leaving Jerusalem and preparing for the work of his life determined upon by Christ Himself, namely, the preaching of the Gospel to the heathen in far-off countries (21).—So far Paul had gotten in his defence without any disturbance on the part of his audience; but his statement that the Messiah Himself had commanded him to announce the glorious tidings of His having come at last, not to the people of the covenant but to the despised heathen—that was more than their selfishness and self-righteousness could endure: they cried out that an Israelite that could utter such rank blasphemy ought to have been put to death long ago and should be dealt with summarily at least now (22). This outcry, accompanied by gestures and actions indicative of stoning (23), caused the chief officer, who evidently had understood little, if anything, of Paul's Aramaic address, to suppose that the latter after all must be a dangerous man; and hence he had him taken to the barracks with the instruction to have him subjected to the terrible torture of scourging, which

was used by the Romans for the purpose of compelling prisoners to confess their crimes (24). When with that intention he had already been bound to a pillar, Paul asked the officer in charge as to their right of treating in such a cruel and ignominious way a Roman citizen who, moreover, had not yet been tried at all (25). This officer, knowing that if Paul was a Roman citizen they would commit a grievous crime against their own laws by scourging him, at once apprised his chief of the circumstances and warned him to desist from what he wanted to have done (26). The latter could hardly believe that this humble, insignificant Jew could be possessed of a privilege for which he himself had paid a great amount of money; but when Paul assured him that such really was the case, he having even been born a Roman citizen (27 sq.), the proceedings were immediately stayed, even the chief officer being in fear because he evidently had gone too far in having him bound as a criminal before any examination had taken place (29). But he wanted to find out what it was that the Jews had against Paul, and so the next morning had the Grand Council come together for a special meeting and placed Paul before them (30).

Ver. 1. **Brethren and fathers.** Comp. vii. 2 (ii. 29).—  
 Ver. 2. **Hebrew.** Comp. xxi. 40.—Ver. 3. **Tarsus in Cilicia.** Comp. xxi. 39. This repeated and explicit statement of the place of his birth contradicts and refutes the tradition mentioned by Jerome and defended by some modern commentators that Paul was born at Giscala, in southern Galilee. **Gamaliel.** Comp. v. 34. **At the feet of Gamaliel.** Can be construed with **brought up** and with **instructed**; the former seems to be preferable since thus the three clauses begin each with a participle: **born . . . brought up . . . instructed.** The third clause adds and emphasizes a special point contained in a general way in

the second clause. **At the feet.** The Jewish custom was that the teacher sat in a higher place and his disciples sat on the floor or on lower seats (comp. Luke ii. 46), or, as a Jewish tradition would have it, stood, at his feet. **Law of our fathers.** Comp. xxviii. 17. The traditions of the elders are probably not included in this expression, but simply the Law given through Moses. It is different Gal. i. 14; Phil. iii. 5. **Zealous for God.** Comp. Rom. x. 2; Gal. i. 14. **Being zealous.** Namely, at that time, in a mistaken and fanatical way, just as they were still; in another, commendable, way he was zealous for God and His cause even then and always.—Ver. 4. **This way.** Comp. ix. 2; xix. 9, 23; John xiv. 6. **Both men and women.** Lit. *not only men but also women.* Comp. ix. 2.—Ver. 5. **The high priest.** Then still living, as it would seem, though no more in office. (Comp. ix. 1.) The ruling high priest at this time was Ananias (A. D. 47-59). (Comp. xxiii. 2.) **Estate of the elders.** Lit. *body of elders*, presbytery, senate, council (comp. Luke xxii. 66). Some, perhaps many, of that body still remembered the, in their view and expectation, once so promising young Pharisee Saul and his ardent, even fanatical, zeal for Judaism. **Brethren.** Jews at Damascus, fellows in the faith of Saul at that time. **There.** Lit. *thither*; they had gone there, perhaps in the persecution following the death of Stephen (comp. viii. 1), and now were there. **In bonds.** Lit. *bound*.—Vers. 6-11. Comp. ix. 3-8.—Ver. 6. **A great light.** Lit. *a considerable light.* (Comp. ii. 13; xxvi. 13.)—Ver. 10. **It shall be told thee.** Lit. *there shall be spoken to thee*.—Ver. 11. **I could not see.** Lit. *I beheld not*, viz. objects of vision; and this for some time (Imperfect, denoting a state and continuation). **Glory.** Brightness, splendor. (Comp. I Cor. xv. 40 sq.)—Vers. 12-16. Comp. ix. 10-19.—Ver. 12. **Devout man according to the law.**

Pious also when judged by the standard of the Jews furnished and established by God Himself. **Well reported of**, etc. Comp. vi. 3; x. 22.—Ver. 13. **Receive thy sight**. Better here, in accordance with the next clause, *look up*, viz. at me, which, of course, Paul could not do without having received his sight again. Thus there is no contradiction between this passage and ix. 17 sq. **And I**. Emphatic, I on my part.—Ver. 14. **Know his will**. As revealed in and by Christ. **See the Righteous One**. Comp. Acts iii. 14; vii. 52; 1 Cor. i. 30; 2 Cor. v. 21; 1 Pet. iii. 18;—1 Cor. ix. 1; xv. 8. The Messiah is, and must be, absolutely righteous and holy. (Comp. Isa. liii. 4, 5, 11; Hebr. vii. 26.) To have seen and heard Him personally was necessary for an apostle (comp. i. 21 sq.); hence this privilege was also vouchsafed to Paul who was to be in some respects the greatest of all apostles. (Comp. 2 Cor. xi. 23.)—Ver. 15. **Unto all men**. A popular expression, similar to, *in all the world*, denoting the universality of Paul's office and labor. **Hast seen and heard**. And wilt carry with thee as a treasure and certainty for life.—Ver. 16. **Why tarriest thou?** Not meant as a rebuke, but as an encouragement and admonition. **Arise**. Paul had been sitting in his blindness. **Be baptized**. Lit. *have thyself baptized*. **Wash away thy sins**. Or, *have thy sins washed away*. (Comp. ii. 38; Rom. vi. 2 sq.) **Calling on his name**. Better, *having called*, etc.; that must precede the baptism of an adult. **His name**. That of the Righteous One. Jesus of Nazareth, in whom the Messiah has manifested Himself, is to be called upon as such, is to be worshipped and invoked as true God, being truly God and man. (Comp. Phil. ii. 9 sq.; Col. ii. 9.)—Ver. 17. **When I had returned to Jerusalem**. Comp. ix. 23 sqq., about A. D. 38, three years after his conversion. (Comp. Gal. i. 17 sq.) Some, however, think that Paul

here refers to the journey to Jerusalem mentioned xii. 25 and to the trance spoken of 2 Cor. xii. 2 sq. **Trance.** Comp. x. 10;—Num. xxiv. 4; 2 Cor. xii. 3.—Ver. 18. **Will not receive**, etc. Comp. ix. 29 sq.—Ver. 19. **I.** Emphatic both times; **I said**, over against Christ, offering my own opinion, though humbly deferring to the authority of my **Lord**, Christ; **I imprisoned**, I was the very person who did that. **Imprisoned and beat.** Lit. *was imprisoning and beating*, was occupied with doing that. **In every synagogue.** This would be hyperbolical; the original can just as well be rendered, *in the synagogues*.—Ver. 20. Comp. vii. 58; viii. 1. **I also.** Lit. *I myself also*.—Ver. 21. **I.** Emphatic, I, thy Lord and Master, the all-wise and sovereign Ruler of the Church, whose instructions must be obeyed implicitly by His servants. (Comp. xiii. 2 sq.; Rom. xv. 19.)—Ver. 22. **Gave him audience.** Lit. *listened to him*. **Away with such a fellow.** Comp. xxi. 36. **It is not fit.** Better, *it was not fit*; we ought to have been permitted to kill him before this. (Comp. xxi. 31.)—Ver. 23. **Threw off their garments.** As a preparation for stoning (20; vii. 58). **Cast dust.** Indicative, and a symbol, of stoning.—Ver. 24. **Castle.** xxi. 34. **Bidding.** Lit. *saying*. **That he might know**, etc. Hence he had not understood Paul's address sufficiently or he would have known that he was not charged with any crime against civil laws.—Ver. 25. **Tied him up with the thongs.** Better, *stretched him out for the thongs*; "the apostle was bound to a post or pillar in order to be exposed to the scourge, and in a suitable manner to receive the torture." (*Popular Commentary*.) **Centurion** (xxi. 32). **Is it lawful**, etc. Comp. xvi. 37. The original, in the interrogative particle introducing the question, implies doubt, thus calling upon the officer to consider well whether he could answer for what he was

about to do. To make use of one's civil and legal rights and privileges over against maltreatment and persecution is no denial of Christ and His teachings, e. g. Matt. v. 38 sqq., as the example of Christ Himself (John xviii. 22 sq.) shows. Compare also Rom. xiii. 3 sq.—Ver. 26. **What art thou about to do?** A warning question, indicating that what he had commanded was unlawful and dangerous.—Ver. 27. **Art thou a Roman?** Lit. *Thou art a Roman?* **Thou** is emphatic.—Ver. 28. **I.** Emphatic, over against Paul. The chief captain knew that Paul was a citizen of Tarsus (xxi. 39), but also that this fact in itself did not make him a Roman citizen, the city being simply an *urbs libera*, a free city (comp. ix. 11); and Paul seemed to be too poor to have paid for the Roman citizenship. This was at that time often sold in a discreditable way to fill the imperial treasury. **I.** Emphatic. **Am born.** The father or another ancestor having obtained the citizenship, either as a reward for services rendered the Roman government, or by purchase.—Ver. 29. **Examine.** Comp. 24 sq. The centurion and his soldiers had heard the conversation between the chief captain and Paul and knew, without any special command, what was to be done under the circumstances. **And the chief captain also.** Not only his subordinates. According to Cicero it was "a misdeed to bind a Roman citizen, a crime to scourge him, and almost a parricide to put him to death," i. e. without proper cause. At the time of Paul, in the general degeneracy of the Roman government, this ancient rule was not rarely violated, but still the consciousness remained that this *was* a violation and severe punishment might follow. **He had bound him.** Lit. *Was having bound him*, was a man who had bound a Roman citizen without any right.—Ver. 30. **Wherefore he was accused**, etc. The explanation of the



**certainty.** "In spite of his being convinced that Paul was a Roman, the captain of the thousand garrisoning Jerusalem was uneasy respecting his prisoner; he could not but believe him guilty of some very grave offence, seeing that so many persons, and among them not a few responsible men, seemed to consider him deserving of death. Treason and rebellion against the empire filled the very air then of Judæa; who then was this malefactor?" (*Popular Commentary.*) Perhaps he was also actuated by motives similar to those of Pilate (Mark xv. 15). **He loosed him.** When? If not before the next day, we must either assume that the chief captain, in order to let Paul feel his power yet for some time, did not do immediately what was his evident duty; or, that binding at that stage of the proceedings was lawful, and that the injustice committed before consisted in having Paul bound before any investigation; or, that the latter binding was of a different nature, not that of a convicted criminal, as the former unlawfully had been, but merely that of a prisoner kept safely until his case is determined. But it seems to us that the interpretation of those is worthy of consideration who construe **on the morrow** simply with **desiring to know**, etc., so that the sense would be, *But as he on the morrow wanted to find out the certainty, wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he, already now, loosed him and commanded*, etc. Upon the whole, it is, however, perhaps best to accept the third of the above assumptions. (Comp. xxiii. 18; xxiv. 23, 27.) Then the expression *loosed him* would here mean that he had Paul brought from his custody in order to place him before the Grand Council. **The chief priests and all the council.** Comp. iv. 5.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### (A.) PAUL BEFORE THE GRAND COUNCIL.

1-11. And Paul, looking stedfastly on the council, said, Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day. And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall : and sittest thou to judge me according to the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law ? And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest ? And Paul said, I wist not, brethren, that he was high priest : for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of a ruler of thy people. But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees : touching the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question. And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees : and the assembly was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit : but the Pharisees confess both. And there arose a great clamour : and some of the scribes of the Pharisees' part stood up, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man : and what if a spirit hath spoken to him, or an angel ? And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should be torn in pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring him into the castle.

And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer : for as thou hast testified concerning me at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

Without a shadow of abject fear or cringing humility Paul stood before the Grand Council, some of whose members were, no doubt, still known to him. (Comp. xxii. 5.) He addressed them as his equals, not superiors, and declared that he, for one, had never departed from the way prescribed to him by the God of Israel, and hence felt innocent of any charge brought against him—

implying, as it would seem, that such was hardly the case with all his judges (1). But scarcely had he uttered these words when the high priest, then Ananias, a man noted for his violence and arbitrariness, commanded the officers standing by Paul to stop such impudent talk by slapping his mouth (2). This high-handed injustice, however, provoked the righteous indignation of Paul, who in strong terms announced to the hypocrite the certain punishment of God (3). The officers by Paul's side rebuked him for using such language to a man holding a high office instituted by God Himself (4); and Paul recognized the impropriety of such language to a ruler of the people of God, but stated that he had not known that person to be the high priest (5). The high priests in those days always belonged to the Sadducees, as perhaps also did the majority of the Grand Council; and from these men, denying, as they did, the very basis of the Christian religion, the resurrection of the dead and the existence of a spiritual world and of a life to come, Paul could not expect a satisfactory treatment of his case. But he also knew that a number of the members belonged to the same party to which he formerly had belonged, that of the Pharisees, who at least held fast to those doctrines repudiated by the Sadducees; and so he with a loud voice told the perhaps somewhat noisy Council that his faith and preaching, which to them seemed so repugnant, ultimately rested on the hope rejected by the Sadducees, namely, that of the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. xv. 12 sqq.)—a hope that already his forefathers had cherished in common with the whole party of the Pharisees (6). Thus, in accordance with the instruction of Christ (Matt. x. 16), combining the wisdom of serpents with the guilelessness of doves, he caused a division in the Council and thereby prevented an unjust decision (7).

A noisy debate ensued, some of the Pharisees even declaring that this man evidently was innocent, and that if, as they had to admit was possible, through a being of the celestial world a revelation had been given him, it would be in vain and even impious to strive against it (9). The tumult assumed such proportions that the chief officer became afraid that Paul might lose his life between the two contending parties, and so had him taken to the barracks by the soldiers (10). The next night, however, Jesus appeared to him, telling him for his encouragement that, notwithstanding all the hatred of the Jews, his desire to preach the Gospel also at Rome would be fulfilled (11).

Ver. 1. **Council.** Comp. iv. 5 ; xxii. 30. **Brethren.** Comp. ii. 29 ; a friendly but not humble mode of address. **I.** Emphatic, over against others and perhaps also members of the Council. **Have lived.** Lit. *have been a citizen*, have conducted myself according to the laws that should govern me. **Before God.** Lit. *unto God*, in the service of God, for His honor and glory. **In all good conscience.** Comp. 1 Cor. iv. 3 sq. ; 2 Cor. i. 12 ; 2 Tim. iv. 7 ; but also Phil. iii. 12. With regard to every case and deed he had the consciousness of having done his duty as far as was in his power, though everything with him as with the best of Christians was weakened and defiled by sin. (Comp. Rom. vii. 14 sqq.)—Ver. 2. **The high priest Ananias.** Comp. xxii. 5. His immediate successor was Ishmael (A. D. 59-61). Some have supposed, on the basis of two passages of Josephus where we are told that Ananias was sent to Rome to defend himself against charges of violence brought against him by the Samaritans, that he was no more ruling high priest at this time ; but their arguments are not convincing, and we have no warrant to depart from

the natural signification of the title high priest in our section as meaning the ruling high priest and not a person that bore that name in its wider sense (iv. 6). **To smite him.** Comp. John xviii. 22.—Ver. 3. **God shall smite thee.** Lit. *To smite thee God is about, or, intends, has in mind.* This is no angry, revengeful threat, but a solemn prediction. Josephus tells us that some years afterwards, at the beginning of the Jewish war against the Romans that ended with the destruction of Jerusalem, Ananias was dragged from his palace and murdered by assassins. **Thou whited wall.** Comp. Matt. xxiii. 27. The following words explain what Paul means: pretending to be solicitous about the strict observance of the Law, the high priest by his grossly unlawful and unjust conduct manifests how little in reality he cares about the Law, i. e. shows that he is a miserable hypocrite. **And sittest thou.** Lit. *also thou sittest*, also thou belongest to the unjust judges. (Comp. xxii. 25).—Ver. 4. **Revilest.** Reproachest, heapest abuse upon. **God's high priest.** Has the emphasis; lit. *the high priest of God thou revilest?* —Ver. 5. **I wist not.** *I did not know.* Perhaps the high priest did not occupy the customary place of that dignitary, and Paul, having been away so long from Jerusalem, did not know him personally. The original sense of the Greek expression is, *I had not seen, or, perceived.* On this some base the assumption that Paul was near-sighted and hence had not recognized the high priest, whom else he would have known and treated with the respect due his exalted office. They connect with this the *thorn in the flesh*, lit. *for the flesh*, mentioned 2 Cor. xii. 7, and regard this as a painful chronic disease of the eyes, perhaps a remnant of the total blindness induced by the glaring light on the way to Damascus (xxii. 6; xxvi. 13), comparing also Gal. iv. 15; vi. 11, 17, which passages cer-

tainly would receive a new light if this assumption could be proved to be correct. The ancient descriptions of Paul's appearance seem to favor this view, and they go back to the second century and may be based on reliable tradition. Other explanations are : Paul lied—but though he was not above temptation and sinning, we cannot think him such a coward as this would show him to be ; Luke erred in representing Paul as he did—but, aside from inspiration, he would surely not represent Paul in a worse light than the facts demanded, and he certainly knew the details of such an occurrence ; Paul uses irony—but that hardly admits of the use of a Scripture passage such as he makes ; Paul had gone too far, and admits it, saying in substance, I used those words without proper reflection, not thinking at all in my indignation of the position of the person that had treated me so unjustly—but the expression, *I wist not*, hardly can mean that. **It was written.** Better, *it is written*, viz. Ex. xxii. 28.—Ver. 6. **Perceived.** Lit. *had perceived*, perhaps by the differing attitude of the members with regard to his excuse, the Pharisees being more inclined to regard lightly disrespect shown to a Sadducean high priest. **Brethren.** ii. 29. 1. Emphatic, over against those members of the Council that were not Pharisees, and explanatory, in part at least, of his religious convictions. **Touching the hope and resurrection of the dead.** A hendiadys, for, *concerning the hope*, namely, the hope of the resurrection, etc. “ On considering Paul's words, ‘ I am a Pharisee,’ it must not be forgotten that after all the great doctrine which distinguished the Pharisees of those days was their belief in the resurrection. It was this which really separated them from their rivals, the Sadducees. The Pharisee teachers, it has been truly remarked, had given to this doctrine a prominence which it

never had before. Many of their noblest members, even leaders, mainly on this account had been secret disciples of our Lord, such as Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and *possibly* the Rabbi Gamaliel" (comp. v. 34; xxii. 3). "Some seven or eight years before this time we know that already among the members of the Christian Church were many avowed Pharisees. (See chap. xv. 5.) The apostle really said, to use Plumptre's paraphrase of his words here: 'I am a Pharisee; yes, I am one with you in all that is truest in your creed. I invite you to listen and see whether what I now proclaim to you is not the crown and completion of all your hopes and yearnings. Is not the resurrection of Jesus the one thing needed for a proof of that hope of the resurrection of the dead of which you and your fathers have been witnesses?'" (*Popular Commentary*.) To emphasize one point, true in itself and important, without mentioning others, equally true and important in another direction, is *not* deception and hypocrisy, especially when it is done in order to gain favorable attention to the introduction and explanation of the latter.

**I.** Emphatic; *that* is *my* crime, really nothing else. **Am called in question.** Lit. *am being judged*.—Ver. 7. **The Pharisees and Sadducees.** The article is not repeated before *Sadducees* because the two formed one whole, the Council, and this whole, this body, became divided according to its two constituent parts. **The assembly.** Lit. *the multitude*, viz. of the people present besides the members of the Council, the former taking sides with the latter, some favoring the views of the Pharisees, some, no doubt, the minority, those of the not so popular Sadducees.—Ver. 8. **Neither angel nor spirit.** These two belong together, the departed *spirits* of men being similar to *angels* and hence forming one class with them over against the *resurrection*. Comp. Matt. xxii.

23. Of course, in both passages that part of the doctrinal system of the Sadducees only is mentioned that is connected with the matter treated of. "*Sadducees*, a sect of the Jews who derived their name from Zadok, either one who was prominent in the third century before Christ, or the Zadok who was high priest under Solomon (1 Kings ii. 35), and whose descendants are mentioned (Ez. xl. 46) as the sons of Zadok, and seem to have become a sort of 'sacerdotal aristocracy.' The Sadducees were a small party, but usually men of wealth and position, and worldly-minded. They stood in direct opposition to the Pharisees. They did not receive only the Pentateuch (as has been mistakenly asserted), but accepting all the written law, denied the oral law handed down by tradition. They denied the resurrection of the body, holding that the soul died with the body, and of course admitted no further state of rewards and punishments. They denied also the existence of angels or spirits. They maintained that good and evil are at man's choice, pushing this moral freedom so far as almost to exclude the divine government of the world. They made common cause with the Pharisees in condemning Christ and bitterly opposed His followers (Acts iv. 1-7, 17). We read of no conversions from their number, while there were some at least from the Pharisees. With the fall of the Jewish state the Sadducees disappeared from history." (*Concise Dictionary*.) Comp. iv. 1. **The Pharisees confess both.** Viz. resurrection, and angel and spirit. *Pharisees*, no doubt derived from the Hebrew word that means *separated*, separatists, because they separated themselves from the common people, claiming to be of extraordinary piety, "a numerous party among the Jews in New Testament times. Their origin is obscure, but they were probably a continuation of the



Assideans (‘the Pious’), a party who in the times of the Maccabees were zealous for the Law in opposition to the Hellenizing faction (1 Macc. iii. 42 sqq.; vii. 13). On the accession of Herod 6000 of them refused the oath of allegiance, but were put down with a strong hand. They differed from the Sadducees in holding an ethical immortality, the existence of Providence and the co-equal authority of tradition with the written Law. The last point they carried so far as to place the explanations of the Law above the Law itself. They tithed garden herbs, yet disregarded justice and mercy (Matt. xxiii. 23); made long prayers, yet devoured widows’ houses (Mark xii. 40); carefully avoided what the Law declared unclean, yet were unmindful of purity of heart (Matt. xxiii. 25 sqq.); and at times made void the Word of God by their tradition (Matt. xv. 6). At the same time these empty formalists taxed the conscience of the people with puerile questions, such as whether it was lawful to eat an egg laid on the Sabbath. Although our Lord recognized the authority of their Scriptural teachings (Matt. xxiii. 2, 3), He rebuked their conceit and hypocrisy, and so incurred their hatred (Luke xi. 39 sqq.). Yet among them were some men of probity and worth, such as Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and Gamaliel. Saul of Tarsus was a Pharisee. Our Lord certainly made some converts from among them, but so far as the New Testament informs us he made none from the semi-infidel Sadducees.” (*Concise Dictionary*.)—Ver. 9. **Clamour.** Crying, outcry. **Scribes.** Teachers of the Law. (Comp. Matt. ii. 4.) **Strove.** Contended fiercely, lit. *fought it out*, or, *among themselves*. **And what**, viz. can or will you do? You can certainly do nothing but submit and recognize the fact. In Greek the sentence is simply, *But if a spirit has talked to him or an angel?* (Comp. John vi. 62;

Rom. ix. 22.) This question was addressed to the Sadducees and refers to what Paul asserted concerning the appearance of Christ on the way to Damascus, which appearance was not admitted by the Pharisees but interpreted as perhaps having been the appearance of a celestial creature. (Comp. 8.)—Ver. 10. **Dissension.** Strife, uproar. **Take by force.** Or, seize and carry off speedily. **Castle.** xxi. 34.—Ver. 11. **The Lord stood by him.** Whether in a vision in the dream (comp. xvi. 9), or in an ecstasy while awake we cannot tell; the former seems probable. **Stood by him.** All at once. **Be of good cheer.** Or, *of good courage.* **Testify.** xx. 21. **Concerning me.** Lit. *those things that pertain to me* my office, work, purpose, etc. **At.** Both times lit. *into*, denoting that Paul had first to go there. Jerusalem and Rome were at that time the two most important cities, the former the religious, the latter the political centre of the world. And Paul was to carry the Gospel from Jerusalem to Rome, which city after the destruction of Jerusalem was to be the religious centre also for many centuries, though, owing to human error and arrogance, for the most part not to the welfare of the Church. (Comp. xix. 21.)

(B.) A CONSPIRACY AGAINST PAUL FRUSTRATED BY  
HIS BEING SENT TO CÆSAREA.

12-35. And when it was day, the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. And they were more than forty which made this conspiracy. And they came to the chief priests and the elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, to taste nothing until we have killed Paul. Now therefore do ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you, as though ye would judge of his case more exactly: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to slay him. But Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, and he came

and entered into the castle, and told Paul. And Paul called unto him one of the centurions, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath something to tell him. So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and saith, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and asked me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say to thee. And the chief captain took him by the hand, and going aside asked him privately, What is that thou hast to tell me? And he said, The Jews have agreed to ask thee to bring down Paul to-morrow unto the council, as though thou wouldest inquire somewhat more exactly concerning him. Do not thou therefore yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves under a curse, neither to eat nor to drink till they have slain him: and now are they ready, looking for the promise from thee. So the chief captain let the young man go, charging him, Tell no man that thou hast signified these things to me. And he called unto him two of the centurions, and said, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go as far as Cæsarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night: and *he bade them* provide beasts, that they might set Paul thereon, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor. And he wrote a letter after this form:

Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix, greeting. This man was seized by the Jews, and was about to be slain of them, when I came upon them with the soldiers, and rescued him having learned that he was a Roman. And desiring to know the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him down into their council: whom I found to be accused about questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds. And when it was shewn to me that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to thee forthwith, charging his accusers also to speak against him before thee.

So the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris. But on the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle: and they, when they came to Cæsarea, and delivered the letter to the governor, presented Paul also before him. And when he had read it, he asked of what province he was; and when he understood that he was of Cilicia, I will hear thy cause, said he, when thine accusers also are come: and he commanded him to be kept in Herod's palace.

How great the hatred of the Jews against Paul was became manifest in the conspiracy that on the next day was formed by more than forty of them who bound themselves by a terrible oath to touch neither meat nor drink until they had put Paul out of the way, calling

down upon themselves the curse of God in case they failed to do so (12 sq.). Of this they then notified the members of the Council most hostile to Paul and asked them to get the Council to prevail upon the chief officer to bring Paul again before them for a pretended closer investigation, so that the conspirators might have an opportunity of carrying out their murderous designs, which they would do when Paul was led to the assembly, before he ever got there (14 sq.). Of this conspiracy the nephew of Paul, studying perhaps at Jerusalem as formerly his uncle had done, somehow was informed and told Paul (16). Paul sent him to the chief officer, who received him very friendly and in private was made acquainted with all the details of the plot (17-21). The young man was dismissed with the instruction not to let any one know that the chief officer was cognizant of the conspiracy (22), and then the latter forthwith made the necessary preparations to get Paul safely out of the reach of his desperate enemies by sending him that very night to the governor Felix at Cæsarea (23 sq.). A letter accompanying the prisoner told the governor by whom and why he was sent (25-30). It was, perhaps advisedly, not particular about the circumstances under which Paul had been found to be a Roman citizen (27), but unmistakably expressed the conviction that he was entirely innocent in the view of the Roman law, how much soever he might have failed with regard to the precepts of the Jewish religion. The whole force of 470 soldiers escorted Paul during the night, and perhaps a part of the next day, to Antipatris, about 40 miles distant from Jerusalem (31). Here they rested after the forced march, and then, as so far nothing indicative of any danger to the prisoner on the part of the conspirators had appeared, the foot-soldiers returned to Jerusalem,

leaving the horsemen as a sufficient guard for the remaining 26 miles to Cæsarea (32 sq.). After having read the letter of the chief officer at Jerusalem, the governor simply asked Paul from what province of the great Roman empire he was, and then postponed the trial until the plaintiffs should have come, as intimated by the letter. Meanwhile Paul was kept, not in a common prison, or dungeon, but in the apartment of the state prisoners, which was a portion of the palace built by Herod the Great for his own residence, then used as the official dwelling of the Roman governor (34 sq.).

Ver. 12. **Banded together.** Lit. *made, or formed, a secret combination*, a conspiracy. Probably "the Jews from Asia" (xxi. 27) took an active part in it.—Ver. 13. **Conspiracy.** Lit. *swearing together*, conspiracy bound together by an oath.—Ver. 14. **The chief priests and the elders.** Comp. iv. 5. Of course, the *Sadducean* members of the Council were drawn into the secret. (Comp. 6.) **Have bound ourselves under a great curse.** Lit. *with a curse we have declared ourselves accursed*, i. e. most solemnly declared ourselves liable to the severest divine penalties, to inevitable destruction, unless we do what we promise to do. (Comp. Josh. vi. 18; vii. 12 sqq.) In case a man was prevented by insuperable difficulties to fulfil his promise the Rabbins could acquit him of his obligation.—Ver. 15. **Ye.** Emphatic; you on your part do what you are best able to do. **With the council.** The whole Council had to act, but the other members, belonging to the Pharisees, were not to be in the secret. Some connect these words with "the chief captain" so that the sense would be, *Signify to the chief captain together with*, or, and to, *the Council*. The position of the words, but not the sense, favors this interpretation; the position is emphatic. **Signify.** Indicate, disclose, declare,

make known. **Bring down.** From the castle (xxi. 31). **Would.** Were about, intended. **His case.** Lit. *those things that have reference to him.* **Judge.** Know accurately, ascertain exactly; examine, determine, decide. **More exactly.** Namely, than heretofore. **We.** Emphatic, we on our part. **Or.** Obsolete for *ere*, before. The members of the Council are apparently to have nothing to do with the murder, are to bear no responsibility in public.—Ver. 16. **Paul's sister's son.** Some suppose that Paul's whole family already in his youth moved to Jerusalem. (Comp. xxii. 3.) **Their lying in wait.** Their insidious intentions. **He came.** Belongs to the graphic character of the narrative. **Castle.** xxi. 34.—Ver. 17. **Centurions.** xxi. 32.—Ver. 18. **Paul the prisoner.** Lit. *the bound one.* (Comp. xxii. 30; xxiv. 27.) Being a Roman citizen, he was now in *custodia militaris*, no doubt chained to a soldier's arm. (Comp. xii. 6.)—Ver. 19. **Took him by the hand.** To inspire him with confidence. (Comp. xvii. 19.) **Going aside.** Lit. *having withdrawn*, perhaps to his private room.—Ver. 20. **As though thou wouldest.** No real discrepancy between this reading, sanctioned by the best manuscripts, and verse 15. On the part of the chief officer and the Pharisee members of the Council the intention would be sincere and honest, on the part of the Jews that were in the secret it was merely a pretence.—Ver. 21. **Thou.** Emphatic, in contrast to the Jews. **Yield.** Lit. *suffer thyself to be persuaded.* **Bound under a curse.** 14. **Promise from thee.** Viz. to bring Paul down.—Ver. 22. **So.** In consequence of what he had learned. **Charging.** Lit. *having charged*, or, commanded. **Tell no man.** Lit. *to tell no one*; the speech first is indirect and then changes to the direct. (Comp. i. 4.) **Tell.** Lit. *speak out*, divulge, to. **Signified.** 15.—Ver. 23. **Two.** Lit. *some*, or, *about*,

*two*, leaving the number indefinite (comp. Luke vii. 19); others, and perhaps better, interpret it, *any two*. Why not, *some*, namely, *two*? **Soldiers.** Here, in distinction from the two other classes, heavy-armed foot-soldiers. **Spearmen.** The Greek word used here is not found in earlier writers, in fact not before the seventh century after Christ. It means in literal translation, *men that take hold with their right hand*, and doubtless denotes light-armed foot-soldiers. *Spearmen* may be the best translation; others prefer, *javelinmen*, or, *slingers*, which is the evident signification of a similar Greek word contained in some manuscripts. So great a body of soldiers was chosen because the chief officer did not exactly know how many might be willing to assist the more than forty conspirators, and because Paul, being a Roman citizen, had to be protected by all means. **At the third hour of the night.** Lit. *from the third hour of the night on*, viz. they should be prepared to start, i. e. about 9 o'clock in the evening.—Ver. 24. Here the direct speech of the preceding verse changes to the indirect. (Comp. 22.) **And.** As something needed in addition. **Beasts.** Horses, or asses; more than one because the journey was long and hasty and so more than one might be needed. **Governor.** Matt. xxvii. 2. **Felix.** “The career of this powerful and unprincipled man, who, owing to his meeting with the despised Jew, Paul, has obtained a conspicuous niche in history, is principally interesting to us as affording a good instance of the way in which high position and great dignity were acquired under the rule of the Cæsars in the first and second centuries of the Christian era. Felix and his brother Pallas were originally slaves, and then freedmen in the house of a noble Roman lady, Antonia, mother of the Emperor Claudius. Pallas became the favorite and subsequently minister of the

emperor. He procured for his brother Felix the important post of procurator of Judæa about A. D. 52. The historian Tacitus writes of him as one who, trusting to his brother's powerful influence at court, knew he could commit any wrong with impunity. He was notoriously avaricious, cruel and licentious, but withal a man of great energy and talent, wielding, however, as Tacitus tells us, 'the power of a tyrant with the temper of a slave.' According to Josephus, he was one of the most corrupt and oppressive governors ever dispatched from Rome to rule over Judæa. Suetonius, in his history of Claudius, mentions this Roman official as the 'husband (in succession) of three queens:' (1) Drusilla, the daughter of Juba, king of Mauritania, and Selene, the daughter of Antony and Cleopatra. (2) Another princess of the same name—Drusilla—the daughter of Herod Agrippa I., and sister of Herod Agrippa II.; she left her first husband, Azizus, king of Emesa, to marry Felix. The name of the third royal lady who married this Roman is unknown. Felix reigned over Judæa some seven or eight years until he was recalled by Nero, who replaced him by Festus, A. D. 60. He owed his deposition to the fall of his brother Pallas, who was subsequently put to death, A. D. 63." (*Popular Commentary*).—Ver 26. **Claudius Lysias**, etc. The usual way with the Romans (and Greeks) to begin a letter. Of this officer nothing else is known. **Most excellent**. The usual title for men of such, or similar, position. (Comp. xxiv. 3; xxvi. 25; Luke i. 3.)—Ver. 27. **This man was seized**, etc. Lit. *This man, having been seized by the Jews and being about to be slain by them, I, having suddenly come upon them with the soldiers, rescued, having learned that he is a Roman.* **Man**. The Greek word expresses a certain respect (comp. ii. 22, 29), in contradistinction to another one that very



often expresses contempt (e. g. vi. 13 ; xxii. 26 ; Mark xiv. 71 ; Luke xxiii. 4, 14 ; John xviii. 17). The account given here is not in perfect accord with xxi. 31 sqq. ; xxii. 23sqq., giving a rather favorable version of the officer's conduct. Whether this is owing to the brevity of the letter or to a not unnatural desire to present his actions in the best light possible, we cannot determine. At any rate, this discrepancy proves the letter not to be a fabrication of Luke's who, in such a case, would have avoided even the semblance of a discrepancy in order not to excite suspicion.—Ver. 28. **And.** As was natural.—Ver. 29. **To have nothing laid to his charge.** Lit. *to have no accusation*, or charge, to be accused of nothing.—Ver. 30. **Shewn.** Disclosed, made known, reported. **Charging.** Commanding, ordering.—Ver. 31. **Antipatris.** On the road from Jerusalem to Cæsarea, built by Herod the Great, and named after his father Antipater ; now Kefr Saba, a miserable Mohammedan village without any vestiges of its former size and importance. For Roman soldiers it was no impossible feat to travel that distance from 9 in the evening to some time next morning. The expression, **by night**, need not mean that the whole distance was travelled during the night. *By night*, under cover of the night, they started and made the greater part of the journey.—Ver. 32. **They.** The majority, the 400 footmen. **Left.** Allowed, permitted, let. **Castle.** xxi. 34.—Ver. 33. **They.** The horsemen. **Came . . . delivered.** Lit. *had come . . . and delivered*.—Ver. 34. **What province.** What kind of a province. There were several classes. A usual distinction was that between *senatorial* and *imperial* provinces, the former being under the jurisdiction of the senate at Rome, the latter under that of the emperor. Cilicia was an imperial province. But this distinction could hardly be of any importance

here. The Greek word used here for province (*eparchia*) denotes either a larger province of the Roman empire, or an appendage to such a one, and the governor, or procurator, of the latter bore also the corresponding title (*eparchos*). Now Cilicia, as well as Judæa, in a manner belonged to the province of Syria, being governed by a Syrian legate, i. e. one under the supervision of the governor of Syria, though Cilicia was more independent in this regard than Judæa. And that may have been the reason why Felix, the procurator of Judæa, tried Paul, a citizen of Cilicia, whilst he might not have done so if Paul had been a citizen of a different province, i. e. an independent one or one in no connection with Syria and Judæa.—Ver. 35. **Hear thy cause.** Lit. *hear thee fully.* **In Herod's palace.** No doubt in consequence of Lysias' favorable report.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### PAUL BEFORE FELIX (A. D. 59).

1-27. And after five days the high priest Ananias came down with certain elders, and *with* an orator, one Tertullus ; and they informed the governor against Paul. And when he was called, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying,

Seeing that by thee we enjoy much peace, and that by thy providence evils are corrected for this nation, we accept it in all ways and in all places, most excellent Felix, with all thankfulness. But, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I intreat thee to hear us of thy clemency a few words. For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of insurrections among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes : who moreover assayed to profane the temple : on whom also we laid hold : from whom thou wilt be able, by examining him thyself, to take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him. And the Jews also joined in the charge, affirming that these things were so.

And when the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, Paul answered,

Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do cheerfully make my defence : seeing that thou canst take knowledge, that it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship at Jerusalem : and neither in the temple did they find me disputing with any man or stirring up a crowd, nor in the synagogues, nor in the city. Neither can they prove to thee the things whereof they now accuse me. But this I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets : having hope toward God, which these also themselves look for, that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust. Herein do I also exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence toward God and men alway. Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings : amidst which they found me purified in the temple, with no crowd, nor yet with tumult : but *there were* certain Jews from Asia—who ought to have been here before thee, and to make accusation, if they had aught against me. Or else let these men themselves say what wrongdoing they found, when I stood before the council, except it be

for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question before you this day.

But Felix, having more exact knowledge concerning the Way, deferred them, saying, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will determine your matter. And he gave order to the centurion that he should be kept in charge, and should have indulgence; and not to forbid any of his friends to minister unto him.

But after certain days, Felix came with Drusilla, his wife, which was a Jewess, and sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ Jesus. And as he reasoned of righteousness, and temperance, and the judgment to come, Felix was terrified, and answered, Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me. He hoped withal that money would be given him of Paul: wherefore also he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him. But when two years were fulfilled, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and desiring to gain favour with the Jews, Felix left Paul in bonds.

Five days after Paul's arrival at Cæsarea the high priest, together with some members of the Grand Council, came down to Cæsarea to bring the official charges against Paul, accompanied by a Roman lawyer as their attorney (1). When the accused had been called, the lawyer began his accusatory speech by fulsome flattery of the ambitious governor on account of his care and diligence in putting down brigandage and violence in his province (2 sq.). But against Paul he could not say much, pretending that he would be brief only for the sake of not detaining the governor, whom he again flattered by speaking, contrary to all truth, of his clemency and mildness (4). He claimed, however, that Paul had been found an exceedingly dangerous person in general and in particular a man that everywhere caused trouble and dissensions among the Jews, and, moreover, one of the principal leaders of the followers of the hated and despised Jesus of Nazareth (5)—a man who had even gone so far as to try to profane the venerated and divinely-appointed sanctuary of his own people; whom they, therefore, also had seized and, but for the violent

interference of the Roman commander, would have had punished according to his deserts (6). And he himself would not dare to deny these charges (8). To this presentation of their attorney the Jews present gave their assent (9). When now Paul had been given permission to reply, he began by stating that he did so the more cheerfully, since he knew the governor to be well acquainted with the character and customs of the Jews, having been in his present office for about seven years and having held an influential position already under his predecessor (10). Furthermore, the offence charged against him was of recent occurrence, and hence the real facts could be easily ascertained, he having come to Jerusalem only twelve days ago for the commendable purpose of worshipping there (11). And no one could prove that he had done anything improper or of a nature to cause trouble and tumult anywhere in the holy city. Thus the charge of his being a dangerous, seditious man could certainly not be substantiated (12 sq.). And as to his being one of the principal leaders of a sect, he could say that he, indeed, believed Jesus of Nazareth to be the Christ, the promised Messiah, but this only in obedience to the revelation of the God of his people as contained in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, the Messianic prophecies and types found there being manifestly fulfilled in and by this Jesus (14). In accordance with that revelation he also cherished the hope of a universal resurrection of the dead, and this is in common with his whole people, the comparatively few and in this respect uninfluential Sadducees not being taken into account (15). Thus he could surely not be called a heretic as to his belief. And in his life he, just because of his faith, took pains to walk in such a way that in his relation both to God and men he always had a good, unharmed conscience (16).

And to enter in detail upon his late conduct in the temple, he had, after an absence of about four years, now come to Jerusalem for the certainly irreproachable purpose of delivering a collection that he had caused to be taken for the poor Jewish Christians in Judæa, and of joining with them in the festive offerings (17). And in the very act of offering the sacrifices of a man that had taken a vow he had been found in the temple, without having tried to attract a crowd or creating a disturbance of any kind; had been found there, not by his present accusers, but by some Jews from Asia Minor, his old adversaries (18), who, therefore, ought to be here to bring charges against him, if they really had any (19). Or also those that were present might say whether in his trial before the Council any misdeed had been proved against him (20); if not, perhaps, they would go so far in their blind fanaticism as to call a misdeed his frankly-expressed belief in the resurrection of the dead, in which hope the people as a whole shared (21).—After he had heard both parties, Felix adjourned the case. Having now, in consequence of the explanation given by Paul, a more accurate knowledge of the Christian religion, with which he doubtless already before was familiar to some extent, he did not feel justified in condemning Paul; and being anxious not to provoke the Jews to whom by his arbitrariness and cruelty he had already given good reasons for complaint, he did not dare to release him either. To the Jews he made the excuse that he would have to see the commanding officer at Jerusalem about the matter before he could decide it; and as to Paul, he gave instructions that he should be kept in military custody, probably chained to a soldier, but otherwise should be treated in a mild and liberal way (22 sq.).—Some time after this, it seems, the second wife of Felix was desirous of seeing

and hearing the celebrated teacher of the Christians. The governor and his wife having come to the prison, Paul was called to speak to them about his faith in the Messiah as having appeared in the person of Jesus of Nazareth (24). But instead of entertaining them, as they had expected, Paul gave them a very earnest lecture on those graces and virtues which they especially lacked, on righteousness and justice, self-control and chastity, and on the last judgment that is sure to come for every man. This terrified Felix, whose conscience was not entirely dead, so that he dismissed Paul with the pretence that he would hear him again on these matters when he had more leisure (25). At the same time he was in hopes that Paul would try to obtain his release by a bribe, and, to give him an opportunity for this, conversed with him oftener; but he was, of course, disappointed in this his selfish expectation (26). So he kept Paul a prisoner for two years, when, in consequence of bad reports against him, he was called back to Rome; but being afraid of the Jews bringing charges against him, he tried to conciliate their favor by leaving Paul behind him a prisoner (27).

Ver. 1. **After five days.** Most naturally understood as referring to Paul's arrival at Cæsarea; not to his hurried departure from Jerusalem, as some take it. **The high priest Ananias.** xxiii. 2. **Came down.** From the mountainous inland city to the lower coast. **Certain elders.** Or, *some elders* (iv. 5), delegates of the Council, or simply representatives of the Sadducean party in it. **Orator.** Forensic orator or advocate. **Informed.** The same word in Greek as the one translated *signify* xxiii. 15; here used in the sense of preferring formal charges. —Ver. 2. **Seeing that by thee,** etc. Lit. *As we are obtaining much peace through thee and reforms are taking*

*place* (are being made) *for this people through thy forethought* (provident care). **Much peace.** Deep, profound peace, peace in a high degree. **Evils are corrected.** Public improvements are being introduced. **This nation.** The Jews.—Ver. 3. **In all ways and in all places.** Some connect this with the preceding clause; *evils are corrected in every way and in every place*, which connection is possible, but not so natural. In the usual construction it means that the thankfulness is manifested, or at least intended to be manifested, in every way and everywhere. **Most excellent.** xxiii. 26. **Felix.** xxiii. 24. This flattery of Tertullus, fulsome and exaggerated as it was, yet had a basis of truth. “Felix, during his long and burdensome administration, had at least distinguished himself by his strong measures to put down brigandage and deeds of violence in Judæa, and had waged ceaseless warfare against these wandering bands of Sicarii (assassins, comp. xxi. 38) which had begun to infest the country. Tacitus, no friend to Felix or his government, relates how, on the occasion of a bitter quarrel between Felix and the governor of Galilee, V. Cumanus, the procurator of Judæa was supported by the president of Syria, Quadratus, and *quietness was restored to the province* (‘*quies provinciæ reddita*,’ Ann. xii. 54). ‘As to the number of robbers whom he caused to be crucified, and of those whom he brought to be punished, they were a multitude not to be enumerated’ (*Wars of the Jews*, Josephus). Yet on the other hand, this cruel and ambitious man kept in his pay a number of Sicarii himself, fanning instead of really quieting the seditious spirit then everywhere abroad. On one occasion, for instance, the hired assassins of Felix murdered in the temple, at the instigation of their employer, Jonathan, the reigning high priest, once the friend of the Romans.” (*Popular*



*Commentary.*) As to other *evils corrected* there was no shadow of truth, Felix being recalled about two years after this because the Jews charged him with bad government and supported their charges by undeniable proof.—Ver. 4. **Be not further tedious.** Do not longer than necessary hinder, keep away, from more important or agreeable work. **Of thy clemency.** By, through, because of, thy (well-known) mildness, or, fairness. **A few words.** Lit. *briefly*.—Ver. 5. **We have found,** etc. Lit. *having found*, etc., an anacoluthic construction, since in verse 6, instead of, *whom we took*, it ought to be, *we took him*, Luke having drawn the main sentence or predicate into the relative construction. (Comp. Rom. xvi. 27.) **Pestilent fellow.** Lit. *pestilence*, pest, plague. **Among.** Lit. *to*, unto, or, *for*. **And.** Something that is connected with the foregoing. **Ringleader.** Lit. *one who stands in the front rank*, chief, champion. **Sect.** v. 17. **Nazarenes.** Comp. John. i. 45 sq. ; vii. 41 sq. In the opinion of the Jews Jesus was born at Nazareth, a city of despised Galilee, and hence could not be the true Messiah ; consequently his adherents were regarded as a contemptible, heretical sect.—Ver. 6. **We laid hold.** The words following here in some manuscripts and given in the R. V. as a marginal reading are, *And we would have judged him according to our law.* 7. *But the chief captain Lysias came, and with great violence took him out of our hands,* 8. *commanding his accusers to come before thee.* Judged merely by external evidence they must be omitted, it seems. Internal reasons can be given both for and against them, and their insertion by a copyist can be explained as well as their omission. What they contain is in accordance with xxi. 30 sqq. The only change in the sense made by the omission of these words is that in the beginning of verse 8, “*from whom,*” must be referred to Paul, whilst

if those words were genuine the reference would be to "*the chief captain Lysias.*" In every case the weight of external testimony, which here is against those words, must decide as long as internal testimony is not decidedly opposed to it, which here is not the case.—Ver. 8. **Thyself.** May be construed also with **thou**, and we think this construction preferable. **Take knowledge of.** Become thoroughly acquainted with. **We.** Emphatic.—Ver. 9. **Joined in the charge.** Lit. *joined in attacking, attacked jointly, assailed together*, viz. with their lawyer.—Ver. 10. **Beckoned.** Given a nod, signified by a nod. **Of many years.** Since many years, for many years. (Comp. xxiii. 24.) Moreover, Felix had occupied for some years under his predecessor Cumanus a very influential position in Samaria; hence Paul is not guilty of any exaggeration or flattery. **Make my defence.** Lit. *defend myself as to those things that have reference to me*, speak in self-defence of my case.—Ver. 11. **Twelve days.** Because of the expression, *It is no more*, viz. at this day, the days Paul had already been at Cæsarea must evidently be counted in (comp. 1); and according to xxi. 27 the seven days of purification were not yet completed, a day or two being still lacking, when Paul was taken prisoner. So this statement of Paul cannot reasonably be doubted as to its complete accuracy. The day on which this trial took place need not be counted in with the twelve, since it was not yet completed; nor the day on which Paul arrived at Jerusalem, since it probably was towards evening, or the close of day, when he got there (xxi. 17 sq.).—Ver. 12. **Stirring up a crowd.** Lit. *causing a press*, a tumultuous gathering, *of the people.* **In the city.** Viz. in other parts of the city, besides the temple area with its courts and the different, according to tradition 480, synagogues of Jerusalem.—Ver. 13.

**Prove.** Lit. *present*, or show, by argument and proof.—Ver. 14. **The way.** ix. 2; xix. 23; xxii. 4. **Sect.** v. 17. **So.** Viz. as described immediately: **believing**, etc. **According to the law.** Better, *in the law*, throughout the the law. The whole Old Testament is here divided into the *Law* and the *Prophets* (comp. Matt. xi. 13; John i. 45; Acts xiii. 15; xxviii. 23; Rom. iii. 21;—Matt. v. 17; vii. 12; xxii. 40); the third division, the *Hagiographa*, “holy writings” (Luke xxiv. 44), as to its contents can be classed either with the Law or the Prophets, or, if by Law the writings of Moses only are understood, as is most probable, with the Prophets, having been written by prophetic men. Here, as usually, the *prophetical* and *typical* contents of the Law and the Prophets are meant; whilst in the three last passages cited above the *legal* contents are referred to.—Ver. 15. **Having hope**, etc., a feature necessarily connected with, and resulting from, the belief in all things contained in the Law and the Prophets. **Toward God.** The hope is directed towards God as the one who can realize it; the same general sense would be expressed by, hope *in* God, having its sphere and life in Him. (Comp. 1 Cor. xv. 19; Phil. ii. 19.) **These also themselves.** As representatives of the whole people, whatever the belief, or unbelief, of some of them, perhaps Sadducees, may have been. **Look for.** Expect; to expect a *hope* is, of course, a brief expression for, to expect the *realization of the hope*, or the *thing hoped for*. (Comp. Titus ii. 13.) The other signification of the Greek word, to *admit*, or, *accept*, in connection with *hope*, is hardly Pauline usage, whilst the expression, to *expect*, or, *wait for*, a *hope*, evidently is (Gal. v. 5). As to the Jewish belief in a general resurrection comp. Dan. xii. 2; Matt. vii. 14; John v. 25. Here Paul no doubt speaks of the resurrection in connection

with Jesus, since His resurrection is the proof of His Messiahship (Rom. i. 4), and he who does not believe in the possibility and reality of the resurrection of the dead in general will not believe in the resurrection of Christ, and hence cannot believe in Christ at all. (Comp. xxiii. 6; 1 Cor. xv. 12 sqq.)—Ver. 16. **Herein.** Viz. lies the reason and motive, that I do, etc., hence *therefore*, because of this, namely, what is stated in the two preceding verses. (Comp. John xvi. 30, where the same expression is translated, *by this*.) **I also myself.** Just as others who have that faith and hope. **Exercise myself.** Take pains, labor, strive. **Void of offence.** Here meant in a *passive* way, not troubled and disturbed by having given offence, blameless, unhurt (comp. xxiii. 1; Phil. i. 10); the *active* sense of the same Greek word is found in 1 Cor. x. 32. **Toward.** In (ethical) relation to.—Ver. 17. **Many.** Better, *several*. He had not been at Jerusalem since the time mentioned xviii. 22. If he were the dangerous agitator and demagogue that he was represented to be by the Jews (5), he would hardly have stayed away so long from the capital of the Jewish nation and religion. **To bring alms.** Emphatic; not, to cause an uproar. **To my nation.** Or, *for my nation*, represented by those Jews that had become Christians and thus in a special, twofold, sense were his nation (comp. Rom. ii. 28 sq.; ix. 6 sqq.); this shows that he was not an enemy of his people. (Comp. Rom. xv. 25 sqq.; 1 Cor. xvi. 1 sqq.; 2 Cor. viii. 1 sqq.) **Offerings.** In the first place, in the original intention of Paul, the sacrifices for Pentecost (xx. 16; comp. xviii. 18); then also the sacrifices of purification may be included (xxi. 23 sqq.).—Ver. 18. **Amidst which.** Lit. *in which*, viz. offerings. **Purified.** Lit. *as one who had purified himself*, i. e. as one who had taken upon himself a vow and now was taking the nec-

essary and divinely prescribed steps to bring it to a close. (Comp. xxi. 24 sqq.) **But there were certain Jews.** Better, *namely, certain Jews*, viz. found me. Not his present accusers had found him doing anything that could be regarded as evil by evil-minded men, though entirely innocent and legitimate in itself, *but certain Jews*. The accusation in verse 5 could not but make the impression that his accusers had been eye and ear witnesses of what he had done.—Ver. 19. **Ought to have been here.** Better, *ought to be* here.—Ver. 20. **Or else.** Lit. simply *or*, since those Jews from Asia are not here.—Ver. 21. **Except it be for this one voice.** Lit. *except* (they found a wrong-doing) *with regard to this one voice*. **Voice**, etc., word that I uttered with a loud voice. **Touching**, etc. Comp. xxiii. 6.—Ver. 22. **More exact.** Than formerly, before this trial. **The way.** 14. **Deferred them.** Put them off, deferred hearing further and deciding their case; **them** refers to both, Paul and the Jews. **Shall come down.** Lit. *will have come down*. **Down.** 1. **Determine.** Examine accurately, decide. **Matter.** Case.—Ver. 23. **And he gave order.** Lit. *giving order*, being construed with, **deferred them**, and coördinate with, **saying**, in the preceding verse. **Kept in charge.** Guarded, as a prisoner. **Indulgence.** Lit. *relaxation*, a less rigorous confinement. **His friends.** Lit. *his own*, those that were connected with him, disciples, companions (e. g. Luke), perhaps also relatives. (Comp. xxiii. 16.) **Minister unto him.** In supplying him with the necessities and comforts of life. In the last clause of the verse, **and not to forbid**, the construction is changed, becoming active, the subject of *to forbid* being the centurion (xxi. 32) who had charge of Paul.—Ver. 24. **Certain.** Some, or several. **Drusilla.** xxiii. 24. She was beautiful, but dissolute, like her sister Bernice (xxv. 13). Concerning her

father, Herod Agrippa I., see xii. 1 sqq., 19 sqq. **His wife.** If the reading that places the word **own** between these two words be correct, as it seems to be, it must be explained as specifying and determining the Greek word for **wife**, which originally simply means *woman* in general, so that *his own woman*, i. e. the woman with whom he lived, is equivalent to *wife*. Comp. 1 Cor. vii. 2; Eph. v. 22; Tit. ii. 5; 1 Pet. iii. 1, 5, where a similar expression is used to denote the idea of *husband*, since the Greek noun originally simply means *man* in contradistinction to *woman*. **Jewess.** Herod's family, though originally Idumean, or Edomite, was regarded as Jewish, the Idumeans being subjugated and compelled to become Jews by the Maccabean prince John Hyrcanus B. C. 130. From them sprang Antipater, who obtained the government of Judæa B. C. 47, the father of Herod the Great. Felix and Drusilla **came**, either to that part of the palace where the prisoners were kept (xxiii. 35), or from a journey or a place where they had stayed for some time. **Faith in Christ Jesus.** Paul's belief that the Messiah had come in Jesus.—Ver. 25. **Reasoned.** xviii. 4. **Righteousness and temperance.** Comp. xxiii. 24. **The judgment to come.** In connection with the resurrection (xxiii. 6; xxiv. 15, 21). **Go thy way.** Depart, thou art dismissed. **Convenient season.** Opportune, or seasonable time. **Call thee unto me.** Send for thee.—Ver. 26. **He hoped withal.** Lit. *hoping also at the same time*. **Of Paul.** By Paul. **Communed.** Associated, conversed, talked.—Ver. 27. **Two years.** From the beginning of Paul's imprisonment at Cæsarea. **Felix was succeeded.** Lit. *received as a successor*. This took place in the summer of either A. D. 60 or 61. **Porcius Festus.** "We know nothing of the previous history of the procurator whose memory has been preserved owing to his meeting with Paul whom he

found a languishing prisoner in Cæsarea. Neither Tacitus nor Suetonius mention him in their histories. Josephus, however, tells us that he governed his stormy province with a wise, firm rule, putting down the Sicarii (assassins) and other predatory companies who were then harassing Judæa. The Jewish historian finds no fault with this Festus; he seems to have been both just and upright. His rule was unfortunately prematurely cut short by death before he had completed his second year of office. He was succeeded by Albinus, another corrupt and evil governor (A. D. 62)." (*Popular Commentary*.) **Gain favour.** Or, *put under obligations.* **In bonds.** Lit. *bound*, a prisoner.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### (A.) PAUL BEFORE FESTUS; APPEALS TO CÆSAR (A. D. 61).

1-12. Festus therefore, having come into the province, after three days went up to Jerusalem from Cæsarea. And the chief priests and the principal men of the Jews informed him against Paul; and they besought him, asking favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem: laying wait to kill him on the way. Howbeit Festus answered, that Paul was kept in charge at Cæsarea, and that he himself was about to depart *thither* shortly. Let them therefore, saith he, which are of power among you, go down with me, and if there is anything amiss in the man, let them accuse him.

And when he had tarried among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down unto Cæsarea; and on the morrow he sat on the judgment-seat, and commanded Paul to be brought. And when he was come, the Jews which had come down from Jerusalem stood round about him, bringing against him many and grievous charges, which they could not prove; while Paul said in his defence, Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Cæsar, have I sinned at all. But Festus, desiring to gain favour with the Jews, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me? But Paul said, I am standing before Cæsar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou also very well knowest. If then I am a wrong-doer, and have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if none of those things is *true*, whereof these accuse me, no man can give me up unto them. I appeal unto Cæsar. Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Thou hast appealed unto Cæsar: unto Cæsar shalt thou go.

As soon as Festus had entered upon the duties of his office as Governor at Cæsarea, his official residence, he very naturally paid a visit to the principal city of his province, the religious capital of the country (1); and imme-



diately the rulers and the foremost men of the Jews renewed their charges against Paul and tried to prevail upon the governor to grant them the favor of having him brought to Jerusalem, making preparations to have him murdered on the way, and thus adopting the murderous designs of their fanatical adherents (2 sq.). Festus, however, flatly refused this request, being, perhaps, suspicious of their intentions, or jealous of his own authority; Paul was to stay at Cæsarea, where the governor himself intended to go in a short time (4). But the duly qualified representatives of the Jews were invited to accompany him to Cæsarea and there bring their formal charges against Paul, if they had any (5). And so it was done; immediately after the governor's return Paul was confronted with his accusers who surrounded him, charging him with many grave crimes, without, however, being able to prove them. Among these charges was one hinted at already before, but now mentioned formally, namely, that of being a disturber of the peace and order of the empire (6-8). Festus, intent upon quieting the people whom his predecessor had left in a state of dissatisfaction and agitation, now was inclined to accede to the first request of the Jews, and hence asked Paul, who according to Roman law was manifestly innocent, whether he would consent to being tried at Jerusalem concerning the charges about religious matters, he, the governor, promising to present himself and to see to it that justice was done him (9). But Paul knew of the murderous intentions of his enemies and therefore insisted upon his right to be tried by the civil courts of the empire, especially since the governor himself had a better knowledge of his innocence also in his relation to the Jews than would appear from his altogether improper request (10). Paul simply wanted his right, no partiality, neither to himself, nor to his

accusers ; and to bring to a certain close the matter that Festus, just as little as Felix, seemed inclined to decide in the proper way, and to protect himself against the insidious designs of the Jews, he had recourse to the last refuge of a Roman citizen who thought that his rights were denied him, namely, to an appeal to the judgment of the emperor himself, though he knew full well that trouble and inconvenience would be connected with it (11). After a consultation with the official advisers that in every province were appointed as assistants of the governor, Festus publicly declared that, since there was no valid objection to his appeal, it was granted (12). And that was the way in which God fulfilled the desire of His faithful servant, also to see Rome (xix. 21)—a way in accordance, not with the intentions and hopes of men, but with His own inscrutable wisdom.

Ver. 1. **Therefore.** In consequence of having become governor of Judæa. **Province.** xxiii. 34.—Ver. 2. **Chief priests.** iv. 5. Not only the ruling high priest who at this time was Ishmael (xxiii. 2). **The principal men.** Not simply the elders (xxiv. 1). **Informed him.** xxiv. 1. —Ver. 3. **Favour.** With regard to the Jews ; with regard to Paul a condemnatory *sentence* (15). **Laying wait.** Lit. *making*, or preparing, *a lying-in-wait*, an ambush. (Comp. xxiii. 12 sqq.).—Ver. 4. **Howbeit.** However, but ; Lit. *so then*, now therefore ; *in consequence of* their petition the governor gave the following reply. **Kept in charge.** xxiv. 23. This expression has the emphasis, in contrast to the demand that he should be brought to Jerusalem. **At Cæsarea.** Lit. *to Cæsarea*, including the idea that he *had been taken to* that place in order to be kept there. (Comp. xix. 22 ; xxi. 13).—Ver. 5. **Therefore.** Since your request will not be granted. **Of power.** Or, *able*, viz. to represent your people, whether by their

position or influence. **Amiss.** Out of place, unbecoming, improper, wicked (Luke xxiii. 41). **Accuse.** Officially, formally, and at the proper place.—Ver. 7. **Stood round about him.** Eager to have him condemned. **Could not.** Much as they tried (Imperfect).—Ver. 8. **While.** Or, *as*; Paul simply denied their charges, and they could not substantiate them. **Cæsar.** xxiv. 5. **At all.** Or, *in any way*, in any particular.—Ver. 9. **Gain favour.** xxiv. 27. **Wilt thou.** Paul, as a Roman citizen, could not be compelled to be judged by anybody except a Roman tribunal. **Go up.** Comp. xxiv. 1. **Judged.** By the Jewish council, according to Jewish laws. Festus may have been moved to meet the Jews so far also by their compliance with his demand (5). Perhaps he knew that Paul would not consent, but his proposal would at any rate be recognized by the Jews as an act of kindness towards them.—Ver. 10. **Cæsar's judgment-seat.** Cæsar, or the Roman emperor, who bore the titles Cæsar and Augustus, or either of them, in honor of the two renowned men of these names, judges through his representatives and officials; they are, so to say, simply his mouthpiece. **I ought.** Being a Roman citizen. **Thou.** Emphatic. **Very well.** Lit. *better*, viz. than appears from thy question. **Knowest.** Lit. *knowest thoroughly*, accurately, well. As Paul had done no wrong to the Jews, there was not the least reason why he should go to Jerusalem to be judged there.—Ver. 11. **Then.** Consequently I submit myself wholly to the Roman law. **Is true.** Lit, *is*, exists, has taken place. **Give me up to them.** Do them a favor by giving me into their hands, try to gain their friendship by sacrificing me to them. **I appeal,** etc. The promise of Christ (xxiii. 11) no doubt also moved him to do this. Not so much the care for his own life as the care for the Church was his motive.—Ver. 12. **When he had conferred with the**

**council.** Viz. whether there was any reason for not granting Paul's appeal, e. g. imminent danger to the state or manifest groundlessness of the appeal.

(B.) FESTUS CONSULTS KING AGRIPPA.

13-27. Now when certain days were passed, Agrippa the king and Bernice arrived at Cæsarea, and saluted Festus. And as they tarried there many days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying, There is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix : about whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed *me*, asking for sentence against him. To whom I answered, that it is not the custom of the Romans to give up any man, before that the accused have the accusers face to face, and have had opportunity to make his defence concerning the matter laid against him. When therefore they were come together here, I made no delay, but on the next day sat down on the judgement-seat, and commanded the man to be brought. Concerning whom, when the accusers stood up, they brought no charge of such evil things as I supposed ; but had certain questions against him of their own religion, and of one Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. And I, being perplexed how to inquire concerning these things, asked whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters. But when Paul had appealed to be kept for the decision of the emperor, I commanded him to be kept till I should send him to Cæsar. And Agrippa *said* unto Festus, I also could wish to hear the man myself. To-morrow, saith he, thou shalt hear him.

So on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and they were entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and the principal men of the city, at the command of Festus Paul was brought in. And Festus saith, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye behold this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews made suit to me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying that he ought not to live any longer. But I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death : and as he himself appealed to the emperor I determined to send him. Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and especially before thee, king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I may have somewhat to write. For it seemeth to me unreasonable, in sending a prisoner, not withal to signify the charges against him.

After some time the new governor received a visit of congratulation from his neighbor east of the Jordan, King Agrippa II. On this visit the king was accompanied by

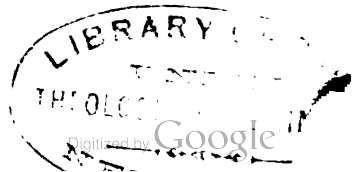
his sister Bernice (13). During this visit the governor also consulted the king on the troublesome case of Paul, stating it in a substantially correct manner, though, of course, not mentioning his real motive for not simply doing what common justice required, namely, setting the innocent prisoner free; but emphasizing the fact that no such charges as he naturally had supposed to be brought against Paul had been proven, and that the only matters worthy of any consideration were of a religious nature, which he was at a loss how to investigate and decide (14-21). Hereupon Agrippa expressed his desire, if feasible, to hear that remarkable man; and Festus promised him an opportunity the very next day (22). On this occasion the king and his sister appeared in all their regal splendor; and besides them the commanding officers of the Roman garrison at Cæsarea and the foremost men of the city had been invited to meet the prisoner in the governor's audience chamber (23). Festus introduced him as the notable man for whose death he had been importuned by the rulers of the Jews, seconded by the great majority of their people (24); whom, however, he could not find guilty, but, because of his appeal to the emperor, had concluded to send to Rome (25). And as he had nothing definite to report concerning him he intended now to have a preliminary investigation, in order that his distinguished visitors, especially King Agrippa, might assist him in determining what ought to be reported (26), for he could not but consider it absurd to send a prisoner to Rome without having any definite charges (27).

Ver. 13. **Certain.** Several, some. **Were passed.** Lit. *had intervened*, viz. since the time spoken of in verse 12. **Agrippa the king.** Son of King Agrippa I. (comp. xii. 1 sqq.) and great-grandson of Herod the Great (Matt. ii. 1). Some years after his father's death (xii. 21 sqq.) his

patron, emperor Claudius, had made him ruler of the territory formerly governed by Philip and Lysanias (Luke iii. 1) and given him the title of king, as also the supervision of the temple at Jerusalem. Emperor Nero increased his territory, and he died during the rule of Trajan, A. D. 101, the last of the Herodian rulers. His residence was Cæsarea Philippi, north of the Lake of Galilee, which city he greatly enlarged and beautified and in honor of the then reigning emperor called Neronias. He was well-meaning, but weak, and loose in morals as most of the Herodians. **Bernice.** Noted for her beauty and gifts, but also for her, even in the Herodian family, uncommon profligacy and licentiousness, being, after the death of her first husband and a divorce from her second, the mistress, at first apparently of her own brother, and then of the Roman emperors Vespasian and Titus. (Comp. xxiv. 24.) **And saluted.** We should expect, *to salute* (participle of the future), as some inferior manuscripts and some ancient versions have it. *Having saluted*, can hardly be the sense, though that would be the usual meaning of the reading supported by the best copies.—Ver. 14. **Many.** Several. **Paul's case.** Lit. *those things that pertained to Paul.* **The king.** Who, as a Jew (comp. xxiv. 24), was better acquainted with Jewish laws and usages and parties, and as superintendent of the temple could be supposed to be especially interested in such religious matters.—Ver. 15. **When I was at Jerusalem.** Lit. *had come to J.* **The chief priests and the elders,** etc. Comp. 2. **Sentence.** Lit. *damnatory sentence*, condemnation.—Ver. 16. **Give up.** For punishment. (Comp. 11.) **Any man.** Whoever he may, and whoever his accusers may be. **The matter laid against him.** Lit. *the accusation, the crime* of which a person is accused.—Ver. 17. **I made no delay but,** etc. Lit. *having*

*made no delay, on the next day having sat down on the judgment seat, I commanded, etc.*—Ver. 18. **Stood up.** Lit. *had stood up*, had appeared, came forward. **I.** Emphatic; *he* had supposed that Paul must be a dangerous criminal, seeing that the Jews and their leaders were so excited and wrought up.—Ver. 19. **Religion.** Or, *superstition*, the noun belonging to the adjective used by Paul at Athens (xvii. 22). **Jesus who was dead.** Lit. *dead Jesus.* **Affirmed.** Alleged, pretended. The religious indifference of Festus is apparent.—Ver. 20. **I.** Emphatic, denoting that he, of course, never cared about such questions and least of all could be expected to be acquainted with Jewish notions and controversies about them. **Perplexed.** Embarrassed, in doubt. **How to inquire.** Lit. *as to the enquiry.* Here Festus keeps back his true motive for acting as he did. (Comp. 9.) **Of.** Concerning.—Ver. 21. **Emperor.** Here the Greek translation of the Latin title *Augustus*, lit. *reverend, venerable, majestic*, is employed. Comp. 10. **Appealed to be kept,** etc. Made an appeal to the emperor to the effect that he, a Roman citizen, demanded that he be kept in custody until the emperor had examined and decided his case, and not be brought before any other tribunal for such decision. **Kept.** xxiv. 23. **Send him.** Lit. *send him up*, the court and capital being always regarded as higher. **Cæsar.** 10.—Ver. 22. **Could wish.** Or, *should wish, would wish*, viz. if it could be so arranged; a polite expression very frequent in Greek. (Comp. Rom. ix. 3; Gal. iv. 20.) **To-morrow,** etc. What made the governor so willing to grant the wish of his royal guest, he himself states afterwards (26).—Ver. 23. **The chief captains.** Comp. xxi. 31. Some suppose that these may have been officers of the king that he had brought with him; for the Herodian princes had soldiers of their own, organized

in the Roman way. At Cæsarea there was a garrison of five cohorts. The definite article before *chief captains* is wanting in the best manuscripts, so that not all that were there would be meant. **The chief captains and the principal men**, etc. Lit. *not only chief captains but also the principal men*, in a manner connecting these two parties as occupying the highest position in the city, the one in military, the other in civil life. All this makes it most probable that the chief captains stationed at Cæsarea are meant.—Ver. 24. **Ye behold**. Here, now, *you behold*, can look at. **All the multitude of the Jews**. Somewhat exaggerating, but certainly not without all foundation, since doubtless a clamoring multitude accompanied the chief priest and elders (2, 15), and these knew that they were representing the great majority of their people. **Made suit to me**. Met me for the purpose of petitioning me. **Crying**. As a tumultuous multitude would do. (Comp. xvii. 6.)—Ver. 25. **I**. Emphatic, in contrast with the Jews. **Emperor**. 21.—Ver. 26. **Certain**. Reliable, offering a solid foundation for the judgment of the emperor. The conduct of the leaders of the Jews, reiterating and urging their accusations against Paul, led Festus to suspect that perhaps there was more in these than he could see; and so he did not know what to say in the official report (the *literæ dimissoriæ*) that had to accompany the prisoner to Rome. **My lord**. Lit. *the lord*, a title that Augustus and even Tiberius would not permit to be used in addressing them, regarding it as adulatory; the later emperors, Caligula first, it seems, however accepted it, and from Domitian on it was a recognized part of their appellation. **Specially before thee**, etc. Comp. 14. **Examination**. Lit. *the examination*, “as a law-term among the Greeks, the preliminary investigation held for the purpose of gathering evidence





for the information of the judges" (*Grimm-Thayer*). So here *the* necessary examination is meant that had to precede the sending to Rome and the report of Festus. **Had.** Lit. *having taken place*. **Somewhat to write.** Lit. *what I may write*.—Ver. 27. **Withal.** Also, at the same time. **Signify.** Indicate, make known, in a clear and unmistakable way.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### PAUL'S APOLOGY BEFORE AGRIPPA AND FESTUS.

1-32. And Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth his hand, and made his defence :

I think myself happy, king Agrippa, that I am to make my defence before thee this day touching all the things whereof I am accused by the Jews : especially because thou art expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews : wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently. My manner of life then from my youth up, which was from the beginning among mine own nation, and at Jerusalem, know all the Jews ; having knowledge of me from the first, if they be willing to testify, how that after the straightest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand *here* to be judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers ; unto which *promise* our twelve tribes, earnestly serving *God* night and day, hope to attain. And concerning this hope I am accused by the Jews, O king ! Why is it judged incredible with you, if God doth raise the dead ? I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And this I also did in Jerusalem : and I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death, I gave my vote against them. And punishing them oftentimes in all the synagogues, I strove to make them blaspheme ; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto foreign cities. Whereupon as I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, at midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them that journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice saying unto me in the Hebrew language, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ? it is hard for thee to kick against the goad. And I said, Who art thou, Lord ? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But arise, and stand upon thy feet : for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee ; delivering thee from the people, and from

the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me. Wherefore, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision : but declared both to them of Damascus first, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judæa, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance. For this cause the Jews seized me in the temple, and assayed to kill me. Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come; how that the Christ must suffer, *and* how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles.

And as he thus made his defence, Festus saith with a loud voice, Paul, thou art mad; thy much learning doth turn thee to madness. But Paul saith, I am not mad, most excellent Festus; but speak forth words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, unto whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things is hidden from him; for this hath not been done in a corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. And Agrippa *said* unto Paul, With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian. And Paul *said*, I would to God, that whether with little or with much, not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds.

And the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them: and when they had withdrawn, they spake one to another, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. And Agrippa said unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.

Having received permission to speak concerning his case, Paul begins to do so in a solemn and impressive manner (1). In the *first* place, he expresses his sincere gratification at being able to address his defence to king Agrippa, a member of the Jewish nation, and therefore well acquainted with the affairs of the Jewish people, and then asks him for a patient hearing (2 sq.).—In the *second* place, he points to his life before he became a Christian, in order to show that only invincible reasons could have moved him to take that step (4-11; comp. ix. 1 sq.; xxii.

3 sqq.). Since he had spent his whole former life among the Jews, and to a great extent even at Jerusalem, there was nothing secret or questionable about it, and the Jews themselves could, if they only would, testify to his strictest compliance with the requirements of his paternal religion as understood by the very leaders of the people, the Pharisees (4 sq.). Nor had he now become a renegade; on the contrary, just because of his clinging to the very heart of the religion of Israel and the greatest consolation and earnest hope of every true and God-fearing member of the people, the promises of the Messiah, and of his divinely-wrought and openly-expressed conviction that they had been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, he was now being treated as a criminal by his own people (6 sq.). Or, to refer to his main foundation for his belief in Jesus as the Messiah, His resurrection, how can a true Jew take the position that the resurrection of Jesus cannot be believed, notwithstanding the irrefutable proofs for it, and thus deny the possibility of a resurrection in general? (8). Paul had not, in blind credulity, immediately joined the followers of Jesus; he had rather at first, in accordance with his training and life so far, regarded it his duty to oppose His claims in every manner possible (9). And this he also did, authorized and commissioned by the religious leaders of the people, first at Jerusalem, persecuting the followers of Jesus even unto the death, and trying his best to compel them to blaspheme as a Satanic deceiver and impostor Him whom so far they had worshipped as their divine Messiah and Saviour; and in his madness and fury he even went to cities outside of Palestine to carry on the work of persecution there (10 sq.). Certainly, such a man had no prejudice or bias in favor of Christianity. Something extraordinary must have influenced him to become a follower and worshipper of that

Jesus whom so bitterly he hated and persecuted in His disciples.—What it was, Paul states in the *third* place (12-18; comp. ix. 3 sqq.; xxii. 6 sqq.). Whilst engaged, as a delegate of the rulers, in one of those missions of hatred and violence, on his way to Damascus, in clear midday, Jesus Himself appeared to him in a light outshining the very sun, reproved him for his groundless persecution, and told him that by wilfully resisting this revelation he would only hurt himself, just as an ox that kicks against the pointed sticks that urge him on to work (12-15). The purpose of this revelation was to make him Christ's servant and witness with regard to what he had seen now, and also what Christ was to reveal to him further on (16). As such witness he was to go, sure of divine protection in all obstacles and persecutions, to Jews and Gentiles (17), to help them, by preaching the Gospel, to understand their true condition as natural men and the only way out of it, so that they might, by divine grace and power, turn from spiritual ignorance and death to spiritual knowledge and life, from being slaves of Satan to being children of God, and thus receive what fallen man needs most of all, forgiveness of sins, and in consequence the eternal inheritance that those only can obtain who by faith in Christ have acquired His perfect holiness and righteousness and, as a natural result, have made, if only a very imperfect, yet a true, beginning in the life becoming him who is a child of God the Holy One (18).—In the *fourth* place, Paul outlines his subsequent life as being in strict accordance with this divine revelation (19-23). In view of the evidently divine character of the vision, as also of the precious prospect offered by it, Paul did not do what, notwithstanding all the extraordinary grace vouchsafed to him, he could have done, that is, wilfully resist the call to become a follower

and apostle of Christ (19), but immediately began preaching at Damascus, then, after some time, performed his office also at Jerusalem, and since in the whole country of Palestine and among the heathen nations, directly and indirectly, personally and by his assistants and converts; and the burden of his preaching was, what no Jew ought to object to, repentance and return to the only true God by receiving the Redeemer sent by Him, and a life worthy of such professions (20). And yet the Jews had tried to murder him for this very work of his, and for nothing else (21). But, thanks to the gracious intervention of God, he could still victoriously preach to every one willing to hear the glorious promises concerning the Messiah and His work, as contained in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, principally in the Prophets (22). For here already the questions raised by the unbelieving Jews have been answered affirmatively, namely, whether the Messiah, instead of being a secular ruler come to deliver His people from political bondage, was to redeem the human race from sin and its consequences by suffering and dying in our stead, and then, risen from the dead as the conqueror of death and the prince of life, have these joyous, life-inspiring tidings of redemption preached not only to the Old Testament people of God but also to the Gentiles (23).

When Paul had proceeded so far in his self-defence, having shown that this belief rested on the holy writings of the Jews themselves and hence could not justly by them be regarded as blasphemous and heretical, Festus could no longer restrain himself; this talk of the resurrection of a simple, enthusiastic Jew and its wondrous consequences was more than he in his imaginary wisdom could endure; and so he interrupted Paul, exclaiming that he could account for his extraordinary position only by

assuming that too much study and speculation had deranged his mind (24). Paul repelled this ungracious assumption politely but decidedly (25), and reminded the governor that king Agrippa, to whom this defence was addressed in the first place, was well acquainted with the holy books referred to as also with the main facts of the life of Jesus, especially His death and what was connected with it, since the scene had been not an obscure corner in Palestine but the city of Jerusalem itself (26). He knew that he confidently could answer himself affirmatively the question whether Agrippa regarded as holy and reliable the prophetic books of the Old Testament, since as a Jew he could not do otherwise, though that, of course, does not include the correct condition of the heart with regard to the promises of the Messiah and His work (27). Evading an answer to the question of Paul, Agrippa somewhat ironically replied that Paul must think it took but little time and trouble to make him a Christian (28). But Paul solemnly rejoined that, if there were any reason for hope in this direction, he would beseech God that, whether it would take little time and labor or much, all his hearers might come to share his religious convictions, though not his bonds (29). The king manifestly did not care to hear more from this earnest man, and so arose and left the audience chamber, followed by the others according to their rank (30). Being by themselves, they could not but express their unanimous conviction that Paul was not an evil-doer or criminal (31); and Agrippa especially expressed it as his opinion to Festus that, if Paul had not appealed to the decision of the emperor himself, he could be set free without any further investigation (32). God, who wanted Paul to go to Rome, had governed all things so that he went there now, witnessing for Christ and His Gospel even in bonds.

Ver. 1. **For thyself.** Lit. *concerning thyself*, thy case. **Stretched forth his hand.** As a speaker conscious of the importance of what he had to say; not the gesture of commanding silence. (Comp. xii. 17; xiii. 16.) Whether *this* hand was bound we do not know, though it is frequently assumed. (Comp. 29.) **Made his defence.** Comp. xxiv. 10.—Ver. 2. **Am accused.** Am being accused, still now. **The Jews.** Lit. only *Jews*; since his accusers were *Jews* He was glad to have Agrippa for his judge, who, as a member of that people, knew them and their religion. (Comp. xxiv. 24.)—Ver. 3. **Especially because thou,** etc. Better, it seems, *because thou especially*, more than other judges. **Expert.** One who knows, judge, connoisseur.—Ver. 4. **Then.** Better, *indeed*. **Was.** Lit. *has taken place*. **And at Jerusalem.** The capital of the nation and hence intimately connected with it.—Ver. 5. **Having knowledge of me.** Lit. *knowing me beforehand*, from former times, not having become acquainted with me just now. **From the first.** From the beginning of my life; a further explanation of *beforehand*. **If they be willing,** etc. Viz. they will have to testify, they cannot deny. **How that.** That. **Straitest.** Most exact, rigorous. **Sect. v. 17. Religion.** Religious worship, especially in so far as it consists in external ceremonies. **Pharisee.** xxiii. 6, 7. Comp. xxii. 3.—Ver. 6. **To be judged.** Lit. *being judged*. **Hope of the promise.** Hope for the realization of the promise. **Of God.** By God.—Ver. 7. **Unto which.** To the realization of which. **Twelve tribes.** The whole people of God (comp. James i. 1), not only myself and some other enthusiasts. **Earnestly.** Intently. **Serving God night and day.** All the time, even during the night, the word *night* having the emphatic position. (Comp. Luke ii. 37.) The continual sacrifices are, of course, included. **This hope.** Viz. my conviction and



assertion that it has been realized in Jesus. **The Jews.** Lit. simply *Jews*, men who claim to have the same promise and hope as I, and ought to be glad to hear that it has been fulfilled.—Ver. 8. **Why**, etc. Some render, *What kind of an incredible thing is it judged to be?* **With you.** Viz. the Jews, represented in a manner by Agrippa. **If God**, etc. As He has done with regard to Jesus. **The dead.** Lit. simply *dead*, viz. men. They, as Jews, can have no reason for regarding that incredible, knowing that God is almighty, and that the raising of the dead is promised in the Scriptures (Dan. xii. 2). Comp. xxiii. 6 sqq.—Ver. 9. **I.** Emphatic, as far as I am concerned, over against credulous enthusiasts. **Thought with myself.** Lit. *seemed to myself*, thought; that was my own idea and thought. **To the name of Jesus.** To His revelation concerning Himself, His claims to be recognized as the Messiah. (Comp. ii. 38.) **Of Nazareth.** Spoken from his former point of view. (Comp. xxiv. 5; John i. 46.)—Ver. 10. **And I both**, etc. *I* is emphatic, a painful reminiscence of what He Himself had done formerly. **Saints.** Spoken from his present point of view. (Comp. ix. 13.) **Were put.** Were being put, when the preparations were made and the necessary steps taken. **Gave my vote against them.** (Comp. viii. 1; xxii. 20.) Some have thought that this indicates that Paul before his conversion was a member of the Grand Council, having a seat and vote in that body. But this does not agree with the designation of Paul as “*a young man*” (vii. 58), nor with his silence about this matter on occasions where he most probably would have mentioned it if it had been the case, e. g. xxii. 3. Thus the general sense of *assenting* is here to be assumed as being expressed. The plural, **they**, **them**, shows that the case of Stephen was not the only one; nor was the **authority** granted him by the **chief**

**priests** (iv. 6) limited to his journey to Damascus (ix. 1 sq.).—Ver. 11. **All the synagogues.** Of Jerusalem. (Comp. xxiv. 12.) **Strove to make them blaspheme.** Lit. *compelled, drove them*; how far he succeeded is not stated. The tense used here in the original (Imperfect) may, however, express the *attempt*. **Blaspheme.** Without an expressed object, *God* is to be supplied as such. Here evidently *Christ* is meant (comp. James ii. 7), since the Pharisee Saul would not compel any man to blaspheme God expressly. **Being mad.** Raging. **Persecuted.** Continually. **Foreign cities.** Lit. *the cities outside*, viz. of Palestine.—Ver. 12. **Whereupon.** Lit. *Wherein*, viz. in which activity of persecution. (Comp. xxiv. 18.) **Commission.** Permission, power.—Ver. 13. **Shining.** Lit. *having shone*, having shed its rays; he saw the light when it had manifested itself in such a way. (Comp. 19.)—Ver. 14. **Hebrew.** Naturally, because it was the mother tongue of Paul (comp. xxi. 40), who here, before Agrippa and Festus, just as naturally spoke in Greek, the common language of all cultivated men in those days. **Goad.** Better, *goads*, pointed instruments to urge on oxen, horses, and other beasts of burden. The proverb used here to express the sense of the original Hebrew is found often in classical writers, and denotes the vanity and danger of resistance. Paul here mentions this word of Jesus in order to emphasize the importance of accepting the call to repentance and faith and the peril of resisting wilfully, as something that also Agrippa ought to take to heart.—Ver. 16. **Minister.** Official servant, as a minister of the Gospel and an apostle. **Witness.** Hence an apostle in the strictest sense of the term, though not exactly in the same sense as the original twelve (i. 21 sq.). Having seen and heard Christ, and being appointed by Him directly made a man an apostle (Gal. i. 1). **Where-**

**In thou hast seen**, etc. Very likely the literal translation of this clause is, *Both of what thou hast seen me and of what I shall appear to thee*, i. e. of what I have now revealed to thee concerning myself, and in future shall reveal to thee concerning myself, by appearing to thee, in visions, ecstasies, and other self-manifestations.—Ver. 17. **Delivering thee**, etc. Paul is to be a bearer of revelation, and as such he will be rescued from the enmity and violence of unbelieving men by Christ Himself. **The people**. In an eminent sense, the people of God during the Old Testament economy. Among this people, as among the Gentiles, Paul was to meet enemies of the Gospel; yea, as the general expression indicates, the majority, both as a class, would prove such enemies, of Christ and therefore also of Paul, His faithful and zealous servant. **Unto whom**. Referring to both classes (xxii. 15). **I**. Emphatic; as Christ is the one that sends Paul it behooves Him also to protect him. **Send**. Already now by appointing him an apostle.—Ver. 18. **That they may turn**. In view of the same expression in verse 20 better than the, grammatically, equally possible translation, *to turn them*. **Darkness . . . light**: the subjective state and condition; **power of Satan . . . God**: the objective connection and relation. **Inheritance among them that are sanctified**. Comp. xx. 32: Col. i. 12. Some understand *them that are sanctified* of the church triumphant, not the church militant; among them, with them, is kept and preserved what every Christian will inherit (1 Pet. i. 4). But the usual interpretation seems to us to be more natural. **By faith in me**. This is by some construed with **may receive**; the position, then, would be emphatic, but not so natural.—Ver. 19. **O king Agrippa**. Calling attention to a new, important point. (Comp. 13.) **Was not**. Lit. *did not*

*prove, or show, myself.* His conversion, though extraordinary and miraculous, still was not irresistible; much less is a common conversion. The converting and saving grace of God never is irresistible. An irresistible grace is a contradiction in terms, destroys man's prerogative and essential faculty, a formally free will, and necessarily limits the Gospel and really efficient grace to a minority of the human race, since it can be intended for those only that actually are saved by it; hence robs the Gospel of its consolation for *every* sinner, since no one without a special revelation could know whether that irresistible grace, and, as its necessary and exclusive result, salvation, was intended for him or not.—Ver. 20. **At Jerusalem.** Comp. xxii. 17. **Throughout all the country of Judæa.** Comp. xi. 30. The probably best reading of this, in the original, somewhat difficult clause could be rendered, *into the whole country of Judæa*, viz. my preaching went. This would not necessarily imply that Paul *personally* preached in the whole country. Moreover, Paul here speaks of his whole activity from the time of his conversion up to his captivity. Hence, there is no contradiction between this clause and Paul's statement in Gal. i. 22 sqq. **Doing works**, etc. And thus proving their repentance a true one. That certainly was not "moving insurrections among the Jews" (xxiv. 5; xxv. 7 sq.). Comp. Luke iii. 8. Paul here could not enter in detail upon the contents of his Gospel; that he did not mean to conceal it out of fear or love of men we see clearly from verse 18.—Ver. 21. **For this cause.** Emphatic. **Assayed.** Attempted.—Ver. 22. **Therefore.** Else I could not stand here to-day. **The help that is from God.** Divine help, the only one that could save him under the circumstances, though, as usual, given through common means. (Comp. xxi. 30 sqq.) **Small**

**and great.** Young and old, everybody (viii. 10). **What the prophets and Moses did say.** Lit. *what not only the prophets did say, but also Moses.* The prophets especially predict the coming of the Messiah, but also Moses, in word (e. g. Gen. iii. 15; xii. 3; xlix. 10; Num. xxiv. 17; Deut. xviii. 15), and type (Col. ii. 16, 17). Moses and the Prophets, this the usual and natural order, is equivalent to the Scriptures of the Old Testament. (Comp. xxiv. 14.) **Nothing but what.** Hence nothing impious or heretical.—Ver. 23. **How that.** Better, *whether.* **First by the resurrection of the dead.** As the first one of the resurrection, being the first one that has arisen from the dead not to die again (Col. i. 18; 1 Cor. xv. 20), and hence the pledge and earnest of the blissful resurrection of those that become His own by faith. **Light.** Comp. 18; John i. 4 sqq. Light includes knowledge and life, true happiness. **To proclaim light** is to announce that there is such true happiness and to show the way to attain it. Christ did this personally after His resurrection, then through His apostles, and continues to do it through the ministers of the Gospel. **People.** 17.—Ver. 24. **With a loud voice.** Here a manifestation of surprise. (Comp. xiv. 10.) **Thou art mad.** Thus very often unbelievers try to explain the faith and life of a true Christian; he is to them a crank. (Comp. Mark iii. 21.)—Ver. 25. **Most excellent.** xxiii. 26. **Speak forth.** Utter, speak. (Comp. ii. 4, 14.) **Sobriety.** Soundness of mind, sanity. What he said was not simply true, as the speech of a madman might be, but also the speech of a man that knew what he was talking about.—Ver. 26. **Knoweth** in the original has the first, emphatic, place, as afterwards also **is hidden**, whilst **the king** has also an emphatic position, viz. the end of the clause. **None.** Also emphatic, being ex-

pressed by two negatives: *not—nothing*. **In a corner.** Comp. John xviii. 20.—Ver. 27. **I know**, etc. Comp. 3. Paul wants the questions that so far might have appeared to concern him only to become a personal matter, a matter of conscience and heart, also to the king—being intent even now upon saving souls, more than upon saving his own life, and thus a shining example to every Christian, especially to every minister of the Gospel.—Ver. 28. **With but little persuasion**, etc. According to the best attested reading the literal translation would be, *In little* (by little exertion or persuasion) *thou persuadest me* (tryest to persuade me, thinkest thou canst persuade me), *in order to make a Christian* (to add one to the number of Christians, viz. me). *Persuade* then is used absolutely and has the meaning of causing to be of one and the same mind with the one who persuades, here, to adopt the faith of Paul in Christ. *To make a Christian* is an expression similar to *to make a proselyte* (Matt. xxiii. 15). **Christian.** xi. 26.—Ver. 29. **I would to God**. Lit. *I would pray to God*, viz. if there were a probability of being heard, or rather, of his hearers not making it impossible for God, by their wilful resistance to His call and grace as contained in the Gospel, to grant the prayer; and the form of the expression, according to the best-attested reading, shows that Paul did not regard it as impossible that his prayer could be heard; in other words, he did not regard his hearers as past hope, or as hardened unbelievers. **With little or with much**, As the case may be with different persons, one requiring more instruction, persuasion, etc., another less. **I am**. The *I* is emphatic; he is not ashamed of being a Christian, rather regards it the greatest blessing that a man can enjoy himself and assist his fellow-men to enjoy. **These bonds**. Comp. 1. Perhaps the chain was now simply on Paul's hand,

not connected with that of the soldier guarding him.—Ver. 30. **The king arose.** Tired, perhaps, of hearing such an enthusiast ; or, somewhat impressed by the last earnest and solemn remark of Paul, which impression he did not care to have noticed. (Comp. xxiv. 25.) At any rate, he neglected the grace of God knocking at the door of his heart and ready to make of him as happy a man as Paul was.—Ver. 31. **They spake.** In a longer, familiar conversation about the matter (Imperfect). **Doeth.** He is not one whose practice and mode of life it is to commit actions that ought to be punished by death or at least by imprisonment.—Ver. 32. **Might have been set at liberty.** Might, or could, already now be a free man, declared innocent of the charges brought against him. **If he had not appealed to Cæsar.** Which made it necessary to send him to Rome.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### PAUL'S VOYAGE TO ROME AND SHIPWRECK (A. D. 61).

1-44. And when it was determined that we should sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners to a centurion named Julius, of the Augustan band. And embarking in a ship of Adramyttium, which was about to sail unto the places on the coast of Asia, we put to sea, Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us. And the next day we touched at Sidon : and Julius treated Paul kindly, and gave him leave to go unto his friends and refresh himself. And putting to sea from thence, we sailed under the lee of Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. And when we had sailed across the sea which is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, *a city of Lycia*. And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing for Italy ; and he put us therein. And when we had sailed slowly many days, and were come with difficulty over against Cnidus, the wind not further suffering us, we sailed under the lee of Crete, over against Salmone ; and with difficulty coasting along it we came unto a certain place called Fair Havens ; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.

And when much time was spent, and the voyage was now dangerous, because the Fast was now already gone by, Paul admonished them, and said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the lading and the ship, but also of our lives. But the centurion gave more heed to the master and to the owner of the ship, than to those things which were spoken by Paul. And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to put to sea from thence, if by any means they could reach Phœnix, and winter *there ; which is* a haven of Crete, looking north-east and south-east. And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete, close in shore. But after no long time there beat down from it a tempestuous wind, which is called Euraquilo. and when the ship was caught, and could not face the wind, we gave way to it, and were driven. And running under the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were able, with difficulty, to secure the boat : and when they had hoisted it up, they used helps, under-girding the ship : and, fearing lest they should be cast upon the Syrtis, they lowered the gear, and



so were driven. And as we laboured exceedingly with the storm, the next day they began to throw *the freight* overboard; and the third day they cast out with their own hands the tackling of the ship. And when neither sun nor stars shone upon us for many days, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was now taken away. And when they had been long without food, then Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have set sail from Crete, and have gotten this injury and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of life among you, but *only* of the ship. For there stood by me this night an angel of God whose I am, whom also I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must stand before Cæsar: and lo, God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sir, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even so as it hath been spoken unto me. Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.

But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven to and fro in the *sea of Adria*, about midnight the sailors surmised that they were drawing near to some country; and they sounded, and found twenty fathoms: and after a little space, they sounded again, and found fifteen fathoms. And fearing lest haply we should be cast ashore on rocky ground, they let go four anchors from the stern, and wished for the day. And as the sailors were seeking to flee out of the ship, and had lowered the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would lay out anchors from the fore-ship, Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved. Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off. And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take some food, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye wait and continue fasting, having taken nothing. Wherefore I beseech you to take some food: for this is for your safety: for there shall not a hair perish from the head of any of you. And when he had said this, and had taken bread, he gave thanks to God in the presence of all: and he brake it, and began to eat. Then were they all of good cheer, and themselves also took food. And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls. And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat into the sea. And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they perceived a certain bay with a beach, and they took counsel whether they could drive the ship upon it. And casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea, at the same time loosing the bands of the rudders; and hoisting up the foresail to the wind, they made for the beach. But lighting upon a place where two seas met, they ran the vessel aground; and the foreship struck and remained unmoveable, but the stern began to break up by the violence of *the waves*. And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of *them* should swim out and escape. But the centurion desiring to save Paul, stayed them from their purpose; and commanded

that they which could swim should cast themselves overboard, and get first to the land : and the rest, some on planks, and some on *other* things from the ship. And so it came to pass, that they all escaped safe to the land.

At the time set by the governor for the departure to Italy Paul, together with some prisoners of a different character, was given over into the custody of an officer by the name of Julius, who belonged to the imperial body-guard (1). In company with the author of this relation, Luke, the eye and ear witness also of what occurred on this voyage, and Aristarchus of Thessalonica, who had joined him again, Paul was put on a ship that was on its way home to Adramyttium in Asia Minor, and was intended to touch at the different points along the coast of that country (2). At Sidon, in Phœnicia, Paul by the kindness of Julius was permitted to meet his Christian friends and to receive their attention in the way of providing for his comfort during the voyage (3). From there, compelled by contrary winds, they had to keep near the coast of the Island of Cyprus (4); and then sailed along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphilia to Myra, a city of the southwestern province of Asia Minor (5). Here the prisoners were put on a ship hailing from Alexandria in Egypt, which was on its way to Italy (6). Because of the contrariness of the winds, as it would seem, they now made very slow progress and with difficulty got as far as Cnidus in Caria; and as also here the wind was still contrary, they could, perhaps, not even enter the inviting harbor of the city, much less continue their course due west, but had to sail south along the eastern coast of Crete (7). Only with difficulty could they make their way along the eastern and southern coast of that island until they got to a place on the southernmost part, called Fair Havens (8). Under these circumstances the voyage had taken very much time, and to continue it much longer

was dangerous, it being already late in the year, after the fast of the great day of atonement, about the beginning of October. Hence Paul reminded his companions in travel that in continuing the voyage they were running a great risk with respect not only to the freight carried by the ship, but also to their own lives (9 sq.). But the adverse opinion of those that naturally were supposed to have the most reliable knowledge of these matters, and also the greatest interest in the ship, had more influence with Julius than the opinion of Paul (11); and because the port was not commodious for wintering, the majority came to the conclusion that it would be preferable to try to get to Phœnix, a harbor in the southwestern part of the island, protected both against the southwest and the northwest winds (12). And when, instead of a northern gale, a soft southern wind began to blow, they thought they would surely carry out their plan, and, starting again, they sailed westward, closer yet to the shore than before (13). But after a short time a northeastern wind, like a hurricane, came down upon them from the mountains of the island (14), and when the ship once had been caught by it, nothing could be done but give way to it and let the ship drive before it (15). Under the shelter of an island southwest of Fair Havens they with difficulty got the boat on board that hitherto had been floating along with the ship, lest the wind should tear it loose (16). Then they strengthened the ship, whose timbers were evidently in danger of parting, by passing strong ropes around its body and tightening them on deck; and to avoid being driven southwest into the so-called Greater Syrtis, a very dangerous place, full of shoals, near the coast of Africa, they lowered the tackle of the ship and drifted (17). To lighten the ship, so that it might not run so deep and thereby draw water or strike the bottom of

the sea, on the following day what could be spared best under the circumstances, no doubt freight, was thrown overboard (18); but on the next day the danger had become so imminent that they cast out even the tackling or furniture of the ship (19). As in addition to this the days and nights were dark, so that they could not at all make out where they were and guide the ship accordingly, the last hope of saving the ship and its human freight was lost (20). Frightened by the seemingly inevitable destruction, no one had thought of taking a meal. And now, in this most hopeless situation, Paul solemnly addressed his companions in travel and distress. Premising, as a reminder that he was a person worth listening to, that they would have been spared all this trouble and loss, if attention had been paid to his well-founded advice given at Crete (21), he bade them be of good courage, for he could assure them that no life would be lost (22), since his God and Master, in answer to his prayer, had through a heavenly messenger revealed to him that not only he himself would get to Rome, but that God also for his sake had decreed the saving of all men on board; and he was confident that this would most certainly come true (23-25). Furthermore, he expressed it as his opinion that they would be driven upon some island (26). And so it came to pass. Two weeks afterwards, when driving about in the sea between Greece and Italy, the sailors thought that they were coming near land (27); and their soundings proved that they were right (28). As it was night, they cast anchor and were anxious for the morning, afraid of being thrown upon rocky ground and thus breaking the ship (29). In this dangerous and doubtful situation the sailors concluded to save at least themselves by getting away with the boat and leave the rest to their fate, and had already lowered the boat under the

pretence of casting anchors also from the front part of the ship (30). No one, it seems, had perceived this but Paul, who now proved himself the saviour of his fellow-travellers. He immediately apprised the soldiers of the danger threatening them (31), and they prevented the cowardly sailors from carrying out their treacherous design (32). As nothing else could be done before day-break, Paul again exhorted all to partake of food after so long a time of abstinence, since they would need strength to save themselves from a watery grave and God had graciously promised to grant them their lives without any harm (33 sq.). Then, as a Christian house-father, he set them an example by eating himself after he had given thanks to God for His mercy and gifts (35); and this cheered them so that they followed his example (36). And there was a great number of them, 276 men (37). After they thus had gained strength again, they threw also the wheat overboard, which perhaps, had formed the greater part of the freight (comp. 18), so that the ship might run ashore as easily as possible (38). At daybreak they saw that they were near some land, but they did not know it, noticed, however, that there was a bay with a gently sloping shore; and they concluded to try to drive the ship upon this beach (39). For that purpose they cut the ropes holding the anchors, simply letting them fall into the sea, made serviceable again the two rudders carried by larger ships, which during the night had been fastened so as not to be damaged by the waves, and put up a sail, probably the topsail, and thus made for the shore (40). So the ship was run aground on a neck of land, or a sand-bank, the front part settling on the ground and the back part being torn into pieces by the violence of the waves (41). As the soldiers were responsible for their prisoners, they came to the conclusion that it would be

best to kill them so that no one might escape by swimming (42). But their commander took too great an interest in Paul, whom he had learned to esteem, to permit this; and so those that could swim were allowed to save themselves in this way, whilst the others could do so by using material taken from the ship (43 sq.).

Ver. 1. **They.** Those commissioned to do so. **Paul and.** Lit. *not only Paul but also.* **Centurion.** xxi. 32. **Augustan band.** Or, the cohort of Augustus, may have been the honorary title of a company of soldiers stationed at Cæsarea that was especially employed in services more immediately connected with the emperor, as was the case here; or Julius may have been the commander of a company of the imperial body-guard at Rome, and for some reason or other may have come to Cæsarea. Some, without good reason, identify the Augustan band with the Italian band mentioned x. 1. About the centurion Julius we do not know anything except what is mentioned here. Tacitus speaks of a Julius Priscus, a centurion of the Prætorians, or the imperial body-guard; but as the name Julius was of so frequent an occurrence we have no valid reason to suppose that the two were the same person.—Ver. 2. **Adramyttium.** A city of Mysia, an Athenian colony not far from Assos, now Edremet. **We.** Paul and Luke, who evidently had been with Paul during his stay at Jerusalem and his captivity at Cæsarea, though not necessarily all the time. (Comp. xxi. 17.) **Aristarchus.** Comp. xix. 29; xx. 4; Col. iv. 10; Philem. 24. Whether he also had been at Jerusalem with Paul, or at Cæsarea, or had joined him just now we do not know. (Comp. xx. 4.)—Ver. 3. **Touched at.** Landed at. **Sidon.** The old renowned city north of Tyre, about sixty miles from Cæsarea, now Saida, containing about 12,000 inhabitants, whilst Tyre, now Sur, has only about 4,000. Why

the ship went due north and touched at Sidon, instead of going northwest, we do not know; perhaps she had passengers or merchandise to land or take there; or the wind may have been contrary, blowing perhaps from the north-west. **Refresh himself.** The marginal reading, *receive attention*, is the literal translation and doubtless includes more than being refreshed. Whether the **friends** were simply fellow-Christians who would be sure to receive their distinguished co-religionist with the kindest attention (xi. 19), or personal friends, can hardly be decided with any certainty; the latter interpretation, however, seems indicated by the word *friends*, not *brethren*. (Comp. x. 24;—xv. 3, 32, 36; xvi. 2, etc.) That Paul could have also personal friends in Phœnicia is seen from xv. 3.—Ver. 4. **The lee.** A place or side defended from the wind; the literal translation is, *we sailed under Cyprus*, close by the high coast, so as to be protected against the wind.—Ver. 5. **Off.** Along, opposite. **Myra.** About two and a half miles from the coast, in the first half of the fourth century the seat of bishop Nicholas who in the Middle Ages was proclaimed the patron saint of sailors.—Ver. 6. **A ship of Alexandria.** Probably one of those large merchantmen that in those days plied between Egypt and Rome, carrying especially grain from the granary of the empire, as Egypt was called, to Italy.—Ver. 7. **Cnidus.** A city situated on a promontory, opposite Cos, known as a prominent seat of the worship of Aphrodite. **Salmone.** A promontory on the eastern coast of Crete, called also Salmonion and Salmonis. The words, **the wind not further suffering us**, or better, *the wind not suffering us to get there*, can be construed with the preceding as well as the following clause, giving the cause for either; it seems preferable to construe it with the clause that follows.—Ver. 8. **Fair Havens.** A name perhaps given the place

in irony because of its unfavorable situation (comp. 12), and still found as the name of a bay in that part of the island. **Lasea.** Not further known.—Ver. 9. **The fast.** In an eminent sense, the only one ordained by God Himself (Lev. xvi, 29 sqq. ; xxiii. 27 sqq.), after the autumnal equinox when navigation as a rule was closed because of the unfavorable weather. **Admonished.** Repeatedly and earnestly (Imperfect).—Ver. 10. **Sirs.** Lit. *men*. (Comp. ii. 29.) **I perceive.** Lit. *behold*, with fear and misgivings, contemplating the violence of the sea. Paul had considerable experience also in this regard (2 Cor. xi. 25). **Injury.** Inflicted by the violence of a tempest. Others take the word in the original sense of *insolence, wantonness, presumptuousness*, because it would be presumptuous and foolhardy to continue the voyage under these circumstances; but the former rendering is preferable. (Comp. 2 Cor. xii. 10).—Ver. 12. **Commodious.** Convenient, fit. **More part.** Greater number, majority. **By any means.** In any way, possibly, perhaps. **Phoenix.** Perhaps the present Lutro. **Looking northeast and southeast.** Wind-ing in such a way that one bank ran northwest, the other southwest. Others think of a double haven.—Ver. 13. **Supposing.** Lit. *having come to think*. **Had obtained.** In part, and hence sure of the rest.—Ver. 14. **Euraquilo.** Northeast wind (an expression found only here in Greek). Other copies have *Euroclydon*, or *Euryclydon*, the former meaning a *southeast wind raising* (mighty) *waves*, the latter, a *wind causing broad waves*. In accordance with these various readings some, instead of, *there beat down from it*, translate, *there cast* (us, or the ship) *away from it* (the island), or, *against it*. We think, however, that the Revised Version is right, having the reading of the best copies and the simplicity of construction in its favor. (Comp. 17).—Ver. 15. **Caught.** Seized by force and car-



ried away. **Gave way.** Lit. *gave over*, gave up to the power (of the wind), viz. the ship, or, ourselves.—Ver. 16. **Lee.** 4. **Cauda.** Or Claudia, called also Claudos, Gaudos, Caudo, still called Gaudos, or Gozza.—Ver. 17. **Helps.** Whatever was needed to undergird the ship, ropes, chains, planks, braces, etc. **Syrtis.** The so-called Greater Syrtis was the nearest, in a southwestern direction; hence the wind mentioned in verse 14 must have blown from the north-east. **Lowered the gear.** Took down the sails so that the wind could not drive the ship so rapidly. A somewhat different explanation is as follows: "What they brought down upon deck was, no doubt, the heavy top-hammer of the masts. The rig of ships at this date consisted of heavy square sails, each with an immense yard, and this would necessitate the presence of other heavy gear. To suppose that the sailors 'strake sail,' in this instance, in the sense of setting no sail at all, would be a great mistake. They could not have adopted a more dangerous course, for thus they would have drifted before the wind into the very Syrtis, which, above all things, they dreaded. What they did was this. They *laid* the ship *to*; and, her head being already to the north, they laid her to on the *starboard tack*, or with her right side to the wind. This is done by setting a small amount of sail, and with the united action of the wind on this sail, and of the rudder on the water, keeping the ship's head as near the wind as possible. This is a method familiar to all sailors, when their design is not to make progress but to ride out a storm." (*Popular Commentary*.) To us the first explanation seems to be more in accordance with the wording of the text. **Were driven.** Or, drifted. The subject here naturally is **they**, viz. those that *lowered the gear*, not *we*, as in verse 15.—Ver. 18. **Laboured with the storm.** Were tossed about by the

tempest.—Ver. 19. **Tackling.** Better, it seems, *the furniture*, or *utensils*, viz. beds, tables, cooking apparatus, etc. The tackling in Greek is another, though similar, word, and it is hardly possible that they would already now have parted with that most necessary thing. **With their own hands.** If the utensils of the passengers were included, though the words, **of the ship**, do not favor that view, the above expression could be referred to them; as it is, it seems best to understand it of the sailors who, without a special command of the officers, did what they would do only when compelled by dire necessity. If we assume that here the general terms *furniture*, or *apparatus*, *equipment*, means the *tackling* or *gear*, the above expression can be understood as opposed to what the tempest did, or could be expected to do.—Ver. 20. **Lay on us.** Pressed upon us as a heavy, fatal burden. **Now.** Lit. *henceforth*, for the future.—Ver. 21. **When they had been long without food.** Lit. *as much abstinence from food existed*. Food had not been taken regularly and properly, as is but natural under such circumstances; no religious fasting is indicated. **Stood forth.** ii. 14; xvii. 22. **Sirs.** 10. **Have gotten.** Lit. *have gained*, and in such a connection, with nouns signifying loss, damage, injury, etc., *avoided*, *escaped*, *spared* (us). **Injury and loss.** 10.—Ver. 22. **Now.** As to the present circumstances, threatening and hopeless as they are from a merely human view. **Among you.** Out of your midst. **But.** Lit. *except*, viz. there will be a loss of the ship; Paul concludes as if the beginning had read simply, *There will be no loss*.—Ver. 23. 1. Emphatic; the God whose Paul is, is the true God, not like the imaginary Gods of most of his fellow-passengers. **Whom also I serve.** Just because I acknowledge Him as the true God, and know that He acknowledges me as His.—Ver.

24. In a manner a correction of what Paul had stated in verse 10 without divine revelation. The apostles were not always inspired or infallible, but only when in virtue of their office they preached the Gospel or reduced it to writing, or when a special revelation in regard to other matters had been granted them. **Cæsar.** Emphatic; hence we shall see Rome, and not perish here.—Ver. 25. **Sirs.** 10. **God.** The true God, the only one that deserves that name; He can safely be trusted to do what He promises.—Ver. 26. **Howbeit.** But. **We must.** A conclusion drawn from the divine promise; not, it seems, directly a part of it.—Ver. 27. **We were driven to and fro.** The wind changing repeatedly. **They were drawing near to some country.** Lit. *some land was approaching them*, speaking optically.—Ver. 28. **Fathoms.** The original, as well as the English word *fathom*, denotes the distance from the tip of one middle finger to that of the other when the arms are outstretched, i. e. 5-6 feet. The depth of the water decreased, showing that they were nearing land. **After a little space.** Having gone a little farther. So the depth decreased very rapidly, making it more dangerous to proceed.—Ver. 29. **Haply.** Perhaps. **Be cast ashore.** Lit. *fall out*, fall off, i. e. from a straight course, be driven; others supply “from deep water,” so that the sense would be, to get out of deep water into a dangerous place. **Rocky ground.** Lit. *rough places*.—Ver. 30. **Colour.** Pretence. **Anchors from the foreship.** Where some were hanging; they were *laid out* by *extending*, carrying forward, the cables to which they were attached.—Ver. 31. **Centurion.** xxi. 32. **These . . . ye.** Both emphatic; *your* salvation depends upon *their* remaining, since they were the only ones that knew how to work a ship, and God makes use of ordinary means where they can be had.—

Ver. 32. **Fall off.** Into the water, so that the sailors could not get in.—Ver. 33. **While.** Lit. *until*; Paul did this during the night, until the day was about to come, until daybreak, when something else would engage the attention. **Some food.** Lit. merely, *food*. So also in the next verse. **This day is the fourteenth day.** Lit. *the fourteenth day to-day waiting* (for deliverance), *you are continually without food*. The latter expression must be understood in the popular way, not in the strictest sense. (Comp. 21.)—Ver. 34. **Beseech.** Or, *exhort, call upon*; so also in the preceding verse. **Safety.** Dependent on being able to get on the land by swimming and other exertions. (Comp. 43 sq.) **Not a hair perish.** Comp. Luke xxi. 18.—Ver. 35. Comp. Matt. xiv. 19; Luke xxiv. 30. That was also the custom of pious Jews.—Ver. 36. **Were.** Lit. *became*.—Ver. 38. **Had eaten enough.** Lit. *had become satisfied with food*. **Wheat.** Others translate, *bread, food*, which is also a signification of the word in the original; but throwing out that would not have lightened the ship so much as throwing overboard the remainder of the main freight, though otherwise this translation fits in very nicely with the beginning of this verse. (Comp. 18.)—Ver. 39. **Took counsel whether.** The violence of the sea made it uncertain. Just as literal and fitting a rendering would be, *And they resolved, if they could, to drive*, etc.—Ver. 40. **Casting off.** Lit. *having taken off round about*, on both sides of the ship (29 sq.). **Left them in the sea.** Lit. *let them* (drop or fall) *into the sea*. **Loosing.** Having loosed.—Ver. 41. **Lighting upon.** Lit. *having fallen into* (so as to be surrounded). **Where two seas met.** A channel connecting two seas; or, better, *lying between two seas*, a tongue of land surrounded by water. **Struck.** Stuck. **Began to break.** Lit. *was being broken up*. St. Paul's Bay, on the

northwest coast of Malta, may really have been the place of this occurrence. It is one of the few places where the shore of the island is gently sloping; and, if that interpretation should be correct, there is a channel, between the small island of Salmonetta and Malta.—Ver. 42. **Was.** Lit. *came to be*; they came to the conclusion or decision.—Ver. 43. **Stayed them from their purpose.** Prevented, hindered, kept them, etc. **And.** In consequence.—Ver. 44. **And the rest.** Viz. should get to the land.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### (A.) PAUL'S STAY AT MALTA (Winter, A. D. 61-62).

1-10. And when we were escaped, then we knew that the island was called Melita. And the barbarians showed us no common kindness : for they kindled a fire, and received us all, because of the present rain, and because of the cold. But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, a viper came out by reason of the heat, and fastened on his hand. And when the barbarians saw the beast hanging from his hand, they said one to another, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped from the sea, yet Justice hath not suffered to live. Howbeit he shook off the beast into the fire, and took no harm. But they expected that he would have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but when they were long in expectation, and beheld nothing amiss come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

Now in the neighbourhood of that place were lands belonging to the chief man of the island, named Publius ; who received us, and entertained us three days courteously. And it was so, that the father of Publius lay sick of fever and dysentery: unto whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laying his hands on him healed him. And when this was done, the rest also which had diseases in the island came, and were cured: who also honoured us with many honours ; and when we sailed, they put on board such things as we needed.

When the shipwrecked travellers had safely reached the shore, they learned that they were on an island called Melita, south of Sicily, now known as Malta and one of the most important possessions of England (1). The inhabitants, of Phœnician descent, spoke a mixed language, neither Greek nor Latin, and therefore were classed with barbarians; but nevertheless they showed more than common hospitality to the shipwrecked party,

which was the more appreciated by these as rain had set in and it was cold (2). When Paul helped in keeping up the fire kindled by the natives, a viper, awakened from its torpid state by the heat, came out of a bundle of brushwood that he had gathered and fastened its poisonous fangs in his hand (3). ~~The superstitious~~ people at first took this to be a sure indication of his being a murderer whom the supposed goddess of justice was persecuting even after he had been saved out of shipwreck (4). But when not the least harm came to him, they went to the other extreme, regarding him as a god, instead of a prominent servant of the only true God (5 sq.). Near the place where the party had come on land were the possessions of Publius, no doubt a Roman, and probably the governor of the island. This wealthy man for three days hospitably entertained Paul and his companions (7). And he was rewarded for his kindness by having his father cured by Paul of a complicated disease in a miraculous way (8). This supernatural help was then, upon application, also extended to the other sick of the island (9). And this again moved the inhabitants to show their gratitude by honoring Paul and his companions in many ways and also by providing them with all the necessities of a continued voyage (10).

Ver. 1. **Were escaped.** Had been saved from imminent perdition. **Then.** Not before. **Knew.** If this is the correct translation here, we must understand xxvii. 39 as meaning that simply that spot or part of the island, under those distressing circumstances, seemed unknown to them, that they did not recognize immediately what they otherwise knew. We think, however, that the meaning of the Greek word here is, *learned*, which seems to fit better to the following words, **that the island was called**, etc. This they were told by the inhabitants, and then they

may have known that they were on an island that in general was known to them, which perhaps they already had passed without landing there. We simply mention here the altogether unwarranted assumption that the island meant here was Meleda on the coast of Dalmatia in the northern part of the Adriatic Sea; the north-western course of the voyage so far (xxvii. 14), the course of the voyage from here on, in a northerly direction ( 11 sqq.), local and historical tradition—all are decidedly and decisively against that assumption and in favor of the almost universal theory given above.—Ver.

2. **Barbarians.** This expression in Greek refers in the first place to the language, denoting men that speak a foreign or strange language, men ignorant of the Greek language and, what was connected with it, Greek culture; the notion of rudeness and brutality is a later and secondary one. **Kindness.** Lit. love of mankind, benevolence. **Present.** Lit. *that had come on*, or, *set in*.—Ver. 3. **Gathered.** Lit. *twisted, rolled, together*. **A bundle.** Lit. *a certain multitude*, a great number, quite a mass, heap, or pile. **Sticks.** The word in the original generally denotes dry sticks, brush-wood, fire-wood, and all similar material used for fuel. **Fire.** Pile of burning fuel (the only signification of the original).—Ver. 4. **Hath not suffered.** They regard the bite of the viper as absolutely fatal.—Ver. 5. **Howbeit.** Lit. *now, verily, indeed*.—Ver. 6. **Expected.** Continually and confidently (Imperfect). **Would have swollen or fallen.** Lit. *would swell, or fall*. **Beheld.** With astonishment. **Amiss.** Harmful. (Comp. Mark xvi. 18.) **A god.** One of the many heathen gods, come in the form of man. (Comp. xiv. 11.)—Ver. 7. **Chief man.** Probably the Roman governor, the legate of the prætor ruling Sicily, of which larger island Malta at that time was a political de-



pendency, as Palestine was of Syria (xxiii. 34). A Greek inscription found in Malta gives that title, lit. *the first one*, to the highest Roman official there. Tradition makes Publius afterwards bishop of Malta, which may be correct. **Us.** Scarcely including the whole shipwrecked party (xxvii. 37), but perhaps only the officers, especially the centurion through whom, as the friend and protector of Paul (xxvii. 43), Publius may have become acquainted with the latter, though the miracle related above, no doubt, had some influence upon him.—Ver. 8. **Fever.** Lit. *fevers*, repeated attacks of an intermittent fever accompanying the dysentery. **Laying.** Lit. *having laid*, preceding the words of healing.—Ver. 9. **The rest.** A popular expression, not necessarily excluding every exception. **Diseases.** Lit. *weaknesses, infirmities*, the Greek word originally signifying want of strength. **Came and were cured.** By and by, not all at once (Imperfect).—Ver. 10. **Such things as we needed.** Lit. *those things that pertained to our needs.* •

#### (B.) THE JOURNEY TO ROME (Spring, A. D. 62).

11-15. And after three months we set sail in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the island, whose sign was The Twin Brothers. And touching at Syracuse, we tarried there three days. And from thence we made a circuit, and arrived at Rhegium: and after one day a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli: where we found brethren, and were intreated to tarry with them seven days: and so we came to Rome. And from thence the brethren, when they heard of us, came to meet us as far as The Market of Appius, and The Three Taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

The stay at Malta lasted three months. Then the party embarked again in another ship from Alexandria which also had been kept at Malta by the inclement weather (11). They landed for three days at Syracuse, the prin-

cipal city of Sicily, on the eastern coast of that island (12). Thence they sailed around this east coast and came to Rhegium, now Reggio, a town on the Italian side of the Straits of Messina, where they stayed for a day; then a favorable south wind brought them on the second day to Puteoli, now Pozzuoli, in the neighborhood of Naples (13). Here was already a Christian congregation, and at their request Paul and his company, by permission of the military officer, stayed with them a whole week (14). Now the journey to Rome was continued by land; and the brethren at that city, having been apprised of Paul's coming, went out to meet them quite a distance; and this evidence of brotherly love greatly strengthened Paul (15).

Ver. 11. **Of Alexandria.** Comp. xxvii. 6. **Which had wintered in the island.** Also an indication that the island was Malta, lying in the course of such a ship. (Comp. 1.) **The Twin Brothers.** Castor and Pollux, the so-called *Dioscuri*, i. e. Sons of Zeus, the tutelary gods of Greek sailors; their picture was the sign painted on the bow of the ship.—Ver. 13. **We made a circuit.** Lit. *having gone around, or, about*; perhaps, on account of an unfavorable wind, they could not sail in a straight direction. The eastern coast of Sicily, not being round, would scarcely lead us to expect an expression like going, or sailing, around it. The other reading, *cast loose*, lit. *having taken away round about*, viz. the anchors, would here have the meaning of *weighing anchors* or *setting sail*. (Comp. xxvii. 40, where the sense is different.) **Puteoli.** Then one of the most important harbors on the western coast of Italy, especially used by Alexandrian corn ships.—Ver. 14. **And so we came to Rome.** After the lengthy stay at Puteoli. Paul here states the final result, and then, in the next verse, adds the details.—Ver. 15. **Of us.** Lit. *that which pertained to us*, con-

cerned us. **The Market of Appius**, Forum Appii; **The Three Taverns**, Tres Tabernæ—two places on the Via Appia, one of the oldest and best public roads in Italy, the former situated about forty miles from Rome, the latter about thirty. Of course, **the brethren** came in two parties, the one meeting Paul at the former, the other at the latter place. From Rom. xvi. 3 sqq. we can conclude that the congregation at Rome was rather large. **He thanked God**, etc. Not because he had expected a cool treatment on the part of the congregation, as consisting mainly of Jewish Christians; for this latter assumption is not warranted by the expressions used by Paul in his Epistle to the congregation, e. g. Rom. i. 6; xi. 13; xiv. 1 sqq. (Comp. also 22.)

(C.) PAUL AT ROME (A. D. 62—).

16-31. And when we entered into Rome, Paul was suffered to abide by himself with the soldier that guarded him.

And it came to pass, that after three days he called together those that were the chief of the Jews: and when they were come together, he said unto them, I, brethren, though I had done nothing against the people, or the customs of our fathers, yet was delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans: who, when they had examined me, desired to set me at liberty, because there was no cause of death in me. But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had aught to accuse my nation of. For this cause therefore did I intreat you to see and to speak with *me*: for because of the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. And they said unto him, We neither received letters from Judæa concerning thee, nor did any of the brethren come hither and report or speak any harm of thee. But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, it is known to us that everywhere it is spoken against.

And when they had appointed him a day, they came to him into his lodging in great number; to whom he expounded *the matter*, testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning till evening. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had

spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the prophet unto your fathers, saying,

Go thou unto this people, and say,  
By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand ;  
And seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive :  
For this people's heart is waxed gross,  
And their ears are dull of hearing,  
And their eyes they have closed ;  
Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes  
And hear with their ears,  
And understand with their hearts,  
And should turn again,  
And I should heal them.

Be it known therefore unto you, that this salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles : they will also hear.

And he abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him.

At Rome, the centurion Julius having delivered his prisoners to the proper authorities, Paul was granted the privilege of choosing his own residence, though of course under the constant custody of a soldier to whom he was fastened by means of a chain (16). After three days, which time was very naturally taken up with visits from the Christian brethren, Paul called to himself those that then were the chief members of the Jewish community at Rome, and told them that he had become a prisoner of the Romans, not because of any crime committed by him against the Jewish nation or customs (17), as the Roman authorities themselves had declared after they had investigated the matter (18), but that only the implacable hostility of the Jews had compelled him to appeal to the judgment of the emperor himself, and that hence they ought not to consider him the enemy and accuser of his own people (19). And this was the reason that he had been free to call them ; for the cause of his being a

prisoner was nothing else than his earnest conviction concerning the fulfilment of the great hope of Israel for a Messiah (20). He received the reply, somewhat formal and guarded, that so far they had not received any charges against him from Judæa, neither written nor oral (21), and that they considered it only fair to hear himself state his convictions touching this important matter in detail; for they were aware that the views Paul espoused were as a rule rejected by the Jews everywhere (22). On the day appointed by themselves they came in greater number than before to the lodging of Paul, and he solemnly set forth to them the Gospel concerning the spiritual kingdom established by God through Christ for the salvation of mankind, and for a whole day did all he could to convince them from the prophecies of their own holy books that in Jesus of Nazareth all the Messianic prophecies were fulfilled (23). With some he succeeded, with others not (24); and at last they went away in discord when Paul, seeing that the majority wilfully withstood all proofs from the Scriptures, had reminded them of the fitness and applicability, also to their case, of the grave word spoken by God Himself through Isaiah the prophet (25), telling him and through him the people of Israel that all the preaching of the Word of God would be of no avail to them (26), because they had wilfully and obstinately hardened their hearts so as not to believe the clear and unmistakable Word of God and thus to return to God in true repentance, and by faith in the Messiah to be healed of all their sin and its consequences (27). And at the same time Paul announced to them that the salvation procured by the Messiah, since the Jews obstinately rejected it, is now principally to be brought to the Gentiles so much hated and despised by them, and that these also will receive it in true faith—

a prediction fully verified by the history of the succeeding centuries (28).—At Rome Paul now stayed for two whole years in the private dwelling that he was permitted to hire by the leniency of the Roman government and the liberal support of his fellow-Christians; and to all that were desirous of learning the truth concerning the way to salvation and Jesus the Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles, he was glad and free to preach the blessed Gospel (30 sq.).

**Ver. 16. Captain of the prætorian guard.** The marginal reading including these words seems to be simply a "learned gloss," not being found in the best copies. As a rule there were at Rome two *commanders of the imperial body-guard*, and presupposing that this was also the case when Paul came there, *the captain* would mean that one of the two whose duty it was to take charge of the state prisoners sent to Rome from the provinces. **With the soldier that guarded him.** Comp. xxiv. 23; xxvi. 29.—**Ver. 17. Those that were the chief of the Jews.** Preferable, because more natural, than the marginal rendering, *Those that were of the Jews first*, viz. before Christians or Gentiles. **I.** Emphatic, in contrast to other prisoners that by their misdeeds had become such. **Brethren.** ii. 29. Paul begins in a friendly, conciliatory way, so that his mode of addressing them could not be blamed if they proved disobedient to the call of God extended through him. **Against.** Contrary or hostile to. Paul's whole activity was in entire conformity with the *true spirit* of Israel and its divine laws, though opposed to the self-righteous spirit of the Pharisees and the people led by them. **Romans.** Represented by the procurator at Cæsarea (xxiii. 23 sqq.). The Jews had, as long as Paul was prisoner at Jerusalem, a certain jurisdiction over him (xxii. 30), which ceased entirely when he was brought

from Jerusalem to Cæsarea.—Ver. 19. **When the Jews spake against it.** Thus Paul here supplements the summary narration given xxv. 9 sqq. When the Jews opposed the desire of Festus to set Paul free, the latter, upon the question of Festus, felt constrained to appeal to the emperor.—Ver. 20. **Intreat you to see and to speak with me.** Better, because the lacking word, *me*, or *you*, is thus more naturally supplied in Greek, *call for you, to see and to speak with you.* **Intreat.** Entreat. **Hope of Israel.** Comp. xxvi. 6.—Ver. 21. **We.** Emphatic, in contrast with others that had received injurious reports concerning Paul. **Any harm.** Anything bad or wicked. The Jews deny any official and certain reports concerning Paul, and may be right in this, since it is entirely probable that no such reports concerning Paul and his journey to Rome could get there before him.—Ver. 22. **Desire.** Think it meet and proper. **What thou thinkest.** Thy principles and plans, thoughts and purposes. **Sect.** xxiv. 14. **This sect.** Of which Paul was one of the chief leaders. Also here the chief Jews are reserved and guarded, not saying more than they had to say. Moreover, the church at Rome was doubtless mostly of heathen nationality (15) and hence was not so well known to the Jews as it would have been if many Jews had been members.—Ver. 23. **Lodging.** 16. **In great number.** Lit. *more*, viz. than the first time. **Testifying.** Witnessing in a solemn manner concerning something, earnestly admonishing to believe and receive it. **Persuading.** As far as lay in him; trying to persuade and convince. **And persuading**, etc. Necessarily connected with the preceding. **Law of Moses and the prophets.** xxiv. 14. **From the law**, etc. Proceeding from that, making that his basis and starting-point.—Ver. 25. **One word.** A most important word, a final word of special

significance. **Well.** Fittingly, properly. **Your fathers.** Whose spiritual children you are also in this respect.—Vers. 26-27. Comp. Matt. xiii. 14 sq.; John xii. 40. **Shall.** Will. **By hearing . . . seeing.** The Hebrew way of emphasizing the following verbs **hear** and **see**. You will indeed hear and see, externally; but this will not lead you to internal understanding and perception, your spiritual blindness and ignorance will remain. **Waxed gross.** Lit. *become thick*, or, *fat*, i. e. devoid of feeling, callous, dull. **Their ears are dull of hearing.** Lit. *with their ears they have come to hear heavily*, with difficulty. **Haply.** Perhaps; they did not want to be converted to their Saviour, did all they could to prevent it. **Perceive with their eyes**, etc. See and hear truly, not merely externally but also internally. They had the means and opportunities, but did not use them. **Should turn again**, be converted, the result of seeing and hearing rightly; **and I should heal them**, the result of conversion. **Understand with their heart.** The same as true seeing and hearing, this being figurative.—Ver. 28. **Be it known.** A solemn declaration and announcement. **Is sent.** By God through the apostles, Paul especially. His captivity at Rome also benefited most of all the Gentiles.—Ver. 29 is omitted in the best copies; it merely repeats and amplifies a statement of verse 25, and was probably originally a marginal note.—Ver. 30. **Two whole years.** What after this became of him, whether after these two years, A. D. 62-64, he was set free and permitted to go on a fourth missionary tour before he suffered a martyr's death, at Rome, in the year 66 or 67, we are not told here; yet the closing words of our chapter do not preclude, but rather suggest, this assumption. **In his own hired dwelling.** Whether the same as the *lodging* verse 23 (comp. 16), we do not know; some sup-



pose the latter to have been the hospitable house of a friend or fellow-believer, which is in accordance with the original sense of the Greek word. As to the means of his support comp. Phil. iv. 10 sqq. That he continued to be a prisoner, we see from Phil. i. 13 sq. (comp. also xxviii. 16).—Ver. 31. **Preaching**, publicly and formally; **teaching**, privately and informally. **Kingdom of God.** 23. **Boldness.** Frankness, unreservedness. **None forbidding him.** Lit. *without hindrance*, though a prisoner. (Comp. 2 Tim. ii. 9.)

## INDEX OF POINTS EXPLAINED MORE FULLY.

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Angel of the Lord, vii. 30.  
Baptism of Infants, xvi. 15.  
Baptism of John, i. 5; xviii. 25; **xix. 1 sqq.**  
Baptism, mode of, viii. 38.  
Brethren of Christ, i. 14.  
Conversion, xvi. 14; xxvi. 19.  
Divination, xvi. 16.  
Elders and bishops, xi. 30.  
Evil, governed by God, i. 16.  
Faith, and the name of Jesus, iii. 16.  
Flesh, ii. 17.  
Glory of God, vii. 2.  
Grand Council, iv. 5 sq.  
Hades, ii. 27.  
Hands, laying on of, vi. 6; **xiii. 3.**  
Hardening, xix. 9.  
High priests, iv. 6; ix. 1.  
Israel, ii. 22.  
Lord, name of Christ, i. 6.  
Name of Christ, ii. 38; iii. 16.  
Natural revelation, xvii. 27.  
Noachian commandments, viii. 27.  
Ordination, **xiii. 3.**  
Ordination to life, xiii. 48.  
Peace, x. 36.  
Persons, God no respecter of, x. 34.  
Peter, position among the apostles, i. 13.  
Pharisees, **xxiii. 8.**  
Possession, not a natural disease, v. 16.  
Predestination, xiii. 48.

- Prophesy, ii. 18.
- Prophets, xi. 27.
- Proselytes, viii. 27.
- Sadducees, xxiii. 8.
- Saints, Christians, ix. 13.
- Sect, v. 17.
- Son of Man, Christ, vii. 56.
- State and Church, xviii. 15.
- Sunday, xx. 7.
- Synagogue, vi. 9.
- Woman, place in government of Church, vi. 2.
- Wonders, signs, and mighty works, ii. 19, 22.

## CHRONOLOGY OF ACTS.

*According to Prof. L. Schulze in Zöckler's "Handbuch."*

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- A. D.    31. Founding of the Church on Pentecost.  
          34. Death of Stephen.  
          35. Conversion of Paul.  
          38. Paul's Flight from Damascus.  
          44. Death of James the Elder and Agrippa I.  
          46-50. Paul's First Missionary Tour.  
          52. The Apostles' Council at Jerusalem.  
          52-55. Paul's Second Missionary Tour.  
          56-59. Paul's Third Missionary Tour and Captivity at Jerusalem.  
          59-61. Paul's Captivity at Cæsarea.  
          61-62. Paul's Journey to Rome.  
          62-64. Paul's Captivity at Rome.  
          64. Paul's Release and Last Missionary Activity.  
          67. Paul's death at Rome.

NOTE.—The main reasons for assuming Paul's release A. D. 64, and a subsequent *fourth* missionary tour, are : 1. Clemens Romanus, a disciple of both Paul and Peter, asserts that Paul, in teaching the whole world righteousness, came even to the boundary or limit of the west (of the setting of the sun), which can mean Spain only, and not Rome. 2. The Muratorian Fragment, dating from the second century, states expressly that Paul made a journey from Rome to Spain. 3. Dionysius of Corinth, Eusebius, Athanasius, Chrysostom, and Jerome mention as reliable tradition that Paul came twice to Rome as a prisoner and suffered a martyr's death the second time. 4. A number of facts mentioned in Paul's Pastoral Epistles cannot be explained chronologically unless we assume a release from the first captivity and a fourth missionary tour, e. g. his activity in Crete (Tit. i. 5); his stay at Nicopolis, where Titus was to meet him (Titus iii. 12); and the same holds good with regard to what he states 1 Tim. i. 3; 2 Tim. iv. 13, 20.

Finally, if Paul had not come free, but had been put to death in his first captivity, it seems Luke would have mentioned this at the close of the Acts, which he could have done in a few words, either immediately, or afterwards, by way of an addition. But the manner in which the Acts end is very natural and intelligible if, in order to bring the history of Paul to a close, Luke would have had to add a good deal more than the mention of his death.